WANTED

AN IRISH UNIVERSITY

And other Essays.

BY AN IRISH PRIEST

2/- NETT.

Wanted——————
AN IRISH UNIVERSITY;

ALSO

ESSAYS ON UNIVERSITY AND KINDRED SUBJECTS.

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

AN IRISH PRIEST.

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Knights of St. Patrick

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

About the middle of April, 1908, the Irish Universities Bill, introduced shortly before in the British House of Commons, was still dragging its slow length along. Designed to improve higher education in Ireland, designed above all to provide the Catholic and Nationalist majority with higher educational facilities, it had not yet found its way to the Statute Book. That it would ever do so, few there were who cared to prophesy with any confidence. Many possible pitfalls were still ahead of it.

The Bill was, at all events, before the House of Commons, and had been for some time. What was Irish Ireland doing? Should the Bill in question ever become an Act of Parliament, it was bound to have far-reaching effects, whether for good or ill, on the fortunes of the National language as well as of Irish nationality. The Gaelic League might have reasonably been expected to show marked signs of activity, but apparently such was by no means the fact.

Before both the Robertson and Trinity College Commissions evidence had been given, on behalf of the Gaelic League, in support of the claims of the National language. The hour had now seemingly come to urge that the demands then made should be conceded, and to set about organising the forces that would make them irresistible. As far as one could observe, little or nothing had been done, or was being done, in either direction.

Certainly there then existed no demand that in any University institutions which might be set up in Ireland, in case the Bill should ever become law, Irish should be compulsory. There was no indication that such a demand ever would be made. The official organ of the Gaelic League had on one or two occasions coquetted with the question. It had stated that it would be not unreasonable

that Irish should be made obligatory; but the subject had been treated in a rather timid, tentative, apologetic manner. There had been no public response. No correspondence had ensued. No demand had been formulated.

Careful inquiries elicited that, within the Gaelic League, so far as the matter had been thought of, opinion, even in the very highest circles, was at the time divided. Of the leaders, some were known to be antagonistic to compulsory Irish, and these possibly the most prominent and influential. A few seemed strongly to favour it. The majority appeared to be apathetic or indifferent. They did not see how any future University that might be founded could seriously affect the fortunes of the language movement. What they considered important was to get Irish taught as extensively as possible in the primary and secondary schools.

Thus did matters stand immediately before the essay to which is assigned the place of honour in this publication, was written. The writer of that essay regarded the question of compulsory Irish as vital. Upon its solution should depend, for many a long year, if not for ever, the character of the University of the majority of the Irish people—whether it should be Irish, or West Briton.

The situation seemed desperate. What could be done? Nothing, apparently, unless to have the question vigorously written up, and an earnest effort made to excite interest therein, if perchance any journals could be found willing to throw open their columns for its full and frank discussion. Such were the circumstances in which the essay above referred to was written.

Discussion of the question was in every way facilitated by *Sinn Fein*, the *Leader*, and the *Peasant*. Indeed before the discussion had been very long in progress, the journal first named devoted to it a very considerable amount of editorial attention, although the editorial views were not always those advanced in the specially contributed articles.

Article followed article, and the discussion grew and expanded. In a very short time real and pretty widespread interest had unmistakably been roused. Long before the Summer had passed, or the Universities Bill had become law, the question at issue had been very fully discussed in practically all its bearings. If the discussion did not seem to have roused much interest outside Gaelic League circles, within the League, at all events, it had caused something like a ferment. For the summoning of the only special meeting of the Airdfheis that had ever assembled, it was largely, if not mainly, responsible. And, appearances perhaps notwithstanding, it had, as subsequent developments were conclusively to show, created no small interest even outside Gaelic League circles. The country had been set thinking. The agitation for compulsory Irish, or rather for an Irish University, had plainly come to stay.

The special meeting of the Airdfheis did not seem to advance matters very much—indeed, rather the contrary. The resolutions it passed were somewhat perfunctory. They formulated no firm nor imperative demand. They suggested that certain things ought to be done, rather than stoutly demanded that they should be done. Such new proposals as they advanced were rather mischievous than otherwise. Then the clangour of battle ceased for a while. The agitation seemed to flag. No effective steps were taken to educate or to organise public opinion. But time was to prove that the agitation was not dead, but only sleeping. At the present moment it is everywhere around us; there is no escaping from its din.

The articles in Part I. of this publication have been collected in the belief that just now they may be of further service. In part, they may perhaps be considered out of date; in the main, they certainly are not so.

In Part II. are gathered together some essays which the Editor happened upon whilst engaged in the aforesaid work

of collection. He regards them as at present of sufficient interest to warrant their republication.

The essays in both parts of the work are now republished, with permission, "for the Glory of God and the honour of Erin."

SINCE ABOVE WAS WRITTEN THE ESSAYS IN PART I. (PP. 57, 65, 69, 73,) HAVE APPEARED, AND IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO INCLUDE THEM.

June 3rd, 1909.

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I.

WANTED AN IRISH UNIVERSITY.

IRISH IRELAND AND THE UNIVERSITY BILL.*

BY

FORTITER IN RE.

ON the University Bill now before the House of Commons I desire to offer no opinion. I merely wish to emphasise the view that, unless there is some serious and unexpected political *debâcle* before the close of the present year, that Bill is very likely to become law. Has Irish Ireland, has the Gaelic League, seriously looked in the face the situation that will thereby be created? Perhaps they have; but, if so, the fact has so far escaped me. As far as a mere onlooker can judge, there appears to be no evidence that, from the Irish language point of view, the gravity of the outlook is all understood.

It is proposed to set up University institutions of a popular character in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. These institutions are meant to cater intellectually for Catholic and Nationalist Ireland. But, what are they to be? Are they to be so many additional formidable agencies for the Anglicisation of the country or are they going to help on materially the work of the Irish revival, and provide it with intellectual headquarters? Unless we are awake, alert, and resolute, there is nothing which one may prophesy with more confidence than that they will mar, and not help, Irish Ireland. Looking to the Senate, as it is likely to be constituted, looking to the promised Statutory Commission, one is forced to the conclusion that the inevitable trend of events in the new institutions will be, not Ireland-wards, but West Britonwards. There are to be Irish Irelanders on the Senate, it is true, but that is more likely to constitute a danger than a safeguard. Irish Irelanders may say: "Such and such persons, all Gaelic Leaguers, are on the Senate. They will see to it that the Irish language gets fair play. There is no need for uneasiness." As a matter of fact, there is very great need. The Gaelic Leaguers on the Senate are a minority. In many respects they have not the weight nor the influence of those who constitute the majority, and who will have quite other views—who, in fact, will regard the views of their Gaelic League colleagues as Utopian and fanatical. Nor have some of the Gaelic League representatives the stamina needed to withstand formidable and powerful opposition. Finally,

* *The Leader*, April 18, 1908.

it is by no means certain that they have themselves clear views, and convictions not to be shaken, as to what fair play for Irish in an Irish University means. It is high time, therefore, to have the question discussed, and to make known to friends and enemies on the Senate, and, most of all, to neutrals, what we want, and what we mean to have.

1. Irish must be an obligatory subject for matriculation. If it be not, then no power on earth can save the University from becoming one of the most powerful Anglicising agencies in the land. Consider the question calmly. A University is essentially a place for specialisation, particularly in the higher courses. You cannot then make subjects compulsory: you must necessarily allow students to select their studies, according to the bent of their minds, or the needs of their future callings. It is only at the very beginning that you can have compulsion, more particularly in the matriculation programme. If, then, you do not oblige a student to know Irish, as you oblige him to know Latin or English, at entrance, the subject will not have the smallest chance of fair play subsequently. Anyone who thinks the matter out can arrive at no other conclusion. Our first and essential demand must, therefore, be that Irish appear on the programme for matriculation as an obligatory subject. It may be necessary to give a few years' notice of this; but, if not from the outset, then, after a few years, certainly, this regulation should be insisted upon. No excuses should be listened to, nor any refusal taken.

2. In all examinations for degrees, scholarships, fellowships, special prizes, Irish should be assigned a status equal, at least, to any other subject in the entire curriculum; and care should be taken that no grouping of subjects should be allowed which would make it impossible, or even difficult, for individual students to take it in the Arts course as one of their subjects right up to the highest examinations and degrees.

3. There should be a faculty of Irish studies—at least, one professor for Old and Middle Irish, and Celtic philology; one professor, and, at least, one assistant or lecturer for Modern Irish; a professor of Irish History; and a professor, or, at all events, an assistant-professor or lecturer in Irish Archæology. In addition, from the very outset lectures should be delivered in Irish in, at least, some one subject—in Irish History, let us suppose, or in such other subject as might be considered most suitable.

With these regulations and provisions, an Irish-Ireland University in the future will be possible; without them it will be an idle dream. The matter is urgent. It needs all the attention that can be given to it. I hope that henceforward the pages of the *Leader* and other organs of Irish Ireland will afford ample evidence that it is not being neglected.

THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.*

BY

SUAVITER IN MODO.

I have just read an article which, whatever else may be said of it, cannot be described as untimely or uncalled for. It sounds a warning to which Irish Ireland had better hearken. That warning is one which needs to be repeated and emphasised, not once only nor in one organ of public opinion, but many times, and throughout the length and breadth of the island. Such at least is my earnest conviction, and therefore it is that I seek the hospitality of your columns on this occasion.

Should the Universities foreshadowed in Mr. Birrell's Bill materialise, which seems to be generally taken for granted, the conditions to be required for matriculation, at all events in the new University to be located in Dublin, will constitute for Irish Ireland the point of supreme and fundamental interest; all further questions will be by comparison of very subordinate importance. Will the national language be made an obligatory subject for matriculation, or will it not? If it be, then other questions become important enough—chairs, regulations, and many other things beside. If, however, it be not, then to spend one's time discussing other matters is merely to waste it in idly beating the air.

What boots it to have professors, lecturers, and half a dozen things in addition, if care be not taken, *in limine*, that those who enter the University shall be qualified to follow, or to benefit by, University courses in the language, history, and literature of Ireland? Under any circumstances, a few will follow such courses and follow them with profit. But in an Irish University, Irish is not Arabic, nor Sanscrit, nor Aramaic; neither is it German, nor French, nor Italian. It is not even Latin nor Greek. Nay, it is not English. Whatever views may be held by different persons as to its practical or educational claims or advantages, it is not to be gainsaid that on historical, national, and patriotic grounds its claims far transcend those of any or all of the aforesaid; it occupies a place and an eminence all its own. This fact must not be lost sight of; nor must those who are to be charged with the organisation of the prospective University be permitted to overlook it.

It is, in fact, the kernel of the whole question. We desiderate an Irish University, "an intellectual headquarters for Irish Ireland," a stronghold of the intellect, culture, and

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* Sinn Féin, April 25, 1908

traditional lore of the Gael, as well as a home of general culture for the youth of Ireland. This we cannot have, if the language, history, and literature of Ireland be not, from every point of view, subjects of prime and striking importance in the curriculum; and such they will not be, and cannot be, unless it be effectively provided that students come to the University prepared, without a single exception, to pursue University studies, and to follow real University lectures, in these subjects. To secure this, there is one way, and one way only, and that is to make Irish an obligatory subject for matriculation.

All these statements, I may, perhaps, be reminded, are but so many commonplaces, so many glaring truisms. I admit it. Were the case otherwise, Irish Ireland would have less ground for uneasiness and apprehension. In this land of shams and paradoxes and inconsistencies and universal topsy-turveydom, the things that are most obvious and the truths that are most commonplace are precisely those that run most risk of having no attention, or much less than their due share of attention, paid to them. It is obvious enough that the Irish language ought not to have been permitted to decay, and become moribund; that adequate provision should have been made, and should even now be made, for it in Irish Colleges, Training Colleges, Seminaries, and Academies; that it should continue to be, as it was, a compulsory subject in Maynooth; that priests sent to minister, or who may be sent to minister, to Irish-speaking flocks should be compelled to master it; that Irish-speaking children should receive religious instruction through the medium of the language which is their vernacular; that the interests and well-being, present and prospective, of the ancestral tongue are quite as much a matter of national concern for our people generally—bishops, priests, and laity—as they are for the Gaelic League. Yes, all these propositions, and scores of others that might be added, are undoubted truisms. But truisms though they be, have they, at any time, met with adequate recognition, or have they had due consideration in practice? Even in the living present, do they fare anything the better for being truisms and commonplaces? Not a particle. On the contrary, the most formidable obstacle against which they have to contend probably is that they are truisms.

Should anybody, therefore, allow himself to be lulled into a sense of security, by reflecting that the claims of the national language are obvious and overwhelming; that the need of making it obligatory for matriculation in the anxiously-awaited University is perfectly manifest; that it is sure to have many and powerful friends in the Senate, he will be acting a singularly insensate part. A policy of that kind, if generally adopted, will, beyond question invite a very rude awakening. As has been pointed out in the article,

whose argument I am here endeavouring to reinforce, the representatives of Irish Ireland on the Senate will be a small and numerically a helpless minority.* In political and social influence, in practical experience of affairs and in the arts of diplomacy and intrigue, they will be hopelessly overmatched by their colleagues, whether of the West Briton or neutral variety. And some there are amongst them whom even their warmest friends and admirers will find it hard to associate with a strenuous and unyielding fight for any cause on earth against overwhelming odds.

Here, then, is the problem with which Irish Ireland is face to face; how to assure the Irish language its rightful place in the contemplated University, in the actual circumstances in which we shall find ourselves when the Bill now before Parliament finds its way to the Statute Book.

Obvious as it is that Irish should be made a compulsory subject for matriculation, if it is to have its rightful place in the University, it can scarcely be doubted that such a proposal, if suddenly sprung upon the Senate, would, by the great majority thereof, be regarded as utterly outrageous. It ought not to be sprung upon them. They ought to have timely warning that such a demand will be made and insisted upon. It should have behind it the solid and universal support of Irish Ireland; and so far Irish Ireland has not made this demand articulate. It is high time that it should make its voice heard, and with no uncertain sound.

In this matter its main reliance must be, not upon its representatives on the Senate, but upon itself. It is not clear that the Senate will have any direct share in the organisation of the University; this is to be entrusted, it seems, to a Statutory Commission, which, however, is to consider suggestions made to it by the Senate. But even if the Senate were to have the entire carriage of the matter, it would be foolish to trust it absolutely. Amongst those of its members whom Gaelic Leaguers might be disposed to regard as friends of the claims of the national language, the two most influential, judging by the published list, are two of the body who are responsible for lowering the status of Irish in Maynooth. If there was in all Ireland a body in whose hands the writer, until quite recently, would have thought the interests of the national language quite safe, that body was the Episcopate; but see what has happened. The amazing action of the Hierarchy has shown that, as compared with interested motives, great causes or inspiring sentiments rarely make a strong appeal to people in high places; that, in last analysis, it is on the rank and file great causes must mainly rely for support, at all events, in the absence of an overwhelming and

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* See p. 1.

organised public opinion, or of some other very powerful driving force. If Irish Ireland, then, takes this question into its own hands, formulates its demand, and backs it, if necessary, by strenuous agitation, it can then rely upon its representatives on the Senate; otherwise it is fairly certain that its reliance upon them will prove to be misplaced.

As to the other matters touched upon in the article above referred to, they will, as I have said, become important, and very important, when the vital preliminary question is settled, but not till then. I merely wish to supply here what seems to be an omission in that article. The University is to have three constituent Colleges, not one; and consequently care must be taken that all those Colleges, and not merely the Dublin College, shall make adequate provision for the national language in respect of Professorships, Lectureships, Prizes, Courses, Degrees and Fellowships. But once again let me, with the writer of the article, urge with all the emphasis possible, that the vital matter, failing which all else will be futile, is to secure that Irish shall be an obligatory subject for Matriculation in the University.

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION, THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND OTHER MATTERS.*

BY

PALMAM QUI MERUIT FERAT.

In that robustly national seat of learning yclept Castleknock College, oratory was quite recently accorded a field-day. Taken in the bulk, the oratory, if one may rely on the newspaper reports, was neither luminous nor impressive. Somehow or other, it did not seem to ring true; and were it not for one short passage in one of the speeches delivered on the occasion, I at least should have no desire to hark back to it nor seek to revive even temporarily an interest therein.

Mr. T. M. Healy, M.P., was one of the speakers. The report of his speech is not very satisfactory; but, such as it is, he is set down as having said, amongst other things: "He had never taken the view that the University would not be safe in the hands of the laity. The Catholic laity must be trusted; and the bishops of Ireland had done well in foregoing any advantages they might have gained from their having its control. This country was on the eve of a movement that would hold aloft the flag of the faith and the country, and they rested assured that flag would be borne nobly and loftily when they were gone."

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* Sinn Féin, May 2, 1908.

It seems obvious enough that the Irish Catholic laity should be trusted. If they cannot be trusted, then beyond yea or nay Catholicity in Ireland is doomed. It may, and undoubtedly will, endure for some time longer; but all the same its fate is sealed. The laity ought to be trusted; they deserve to be trusted; and, as Mr. Healy has put it, they must be trusted. In Ireland, if anywhere, they have established their right to be trusted. For centuries they had no legal existence. Then they acquired civil rights, and ever since, for reasons which need not be here set forth, they have until now been *in statu pupillari;* but that state of things cannot, and most assuredly will not, endure much longer. Any attempt to perpetuate it will bring its own Nemesis. Again, then, the Irish laity can be trusted, should be trusted, and must be trusted.

Strange to say, there has been and is a manifest reluctance to trust them; and it would, I fear, be premature to conclude that we are on the eve of seeing another and a far wiser policy adopted. It is not at all clear that the Bishops have decisively made up their minds to forego "any advantages they might have gained from their having" control of the University. It is at present quite on the cards that they may decide against its acceptance; or, if not, that they may elect to stand aside, assume no responsibility for its acceptance, and refrain both individually and corporately from associating themselves with it in any way. The latter course would be scarcely less deplorable than the former.

"He had never taken the view that the University would not be safe in the hands of the laity"; so Mr. Healy is reported to have said. On that point I venture no opinion. I am as ready to trust the laity as anybody, and to go as far as anybody in trusting them; but whether the University would be safe in their hands or not, I say most emphatically that it ought not to be left in their hands. It should be in the hands of both clergy and laity cordially co-operating, loyally and harmoniously doing their combined utmost for its advancement and for its general interests. In the hands of clergy and laity, thus working together in hearty accord, the University, I have no doubt whatever, would be quite safe, with or without tests—just as safe as the faith of Patrick has been in their hands in the past. But let there be no distrust nor suspicion on either side. There is nothing that the enemy of both would more desire than to sow the seeds of such distrust and suspicion.

No doubt the University will, in theory and in legal status, be about as far removed from the Catholic ideal as it is possible to imagine. As compared with the University offered by Lord Mayo, and so foolishly rejected, it is, of course, nowhere from the Catholic standpoint: nowhere, at all events,

on paper. But at the worst it is not more unpromising than was the so-called system of National Education when it was foisted on a country which did not desire nor welcome it. The faith of Ireland, and the cordial union of clergy and laity, may be trusted to make the one as innocuous in practice as they have admittedly made the other. If the clergy do not stand out of the University, if the future priests of Ireland be not kept out of it, if the "queen and mistress of the sciences" be accorded her proper place therein, there need be no fear for it on the score of faith; but if the clergy give it the cold shoulder, if clergy and laity be allowed to drift ever farther and farther apart, if any colour be afforded for the belief that the general education of the clergy is inferior to that of members of the other professions and of the educated laity, if the highest of all the sciences be permanently excluded, then, no matter how the University may fare for a time, few can, without uneasiness, contemplate its ultimate destiny. It rests with the Bishops to decide its fate. They can, if they choose, make it, with all its theoretical drawbacks, a stronghold of faith as well as of learning. Will they do so? Just at this moment, that is the question of questions! But whatever they may do, it is indubitable that the power is theirs so to decide as to neutralise in practice any danger to faith that may lurk in a University so constituted.

One would like to feel as easy about the contemplated University on the score of Nationality and of native culture, as one is justified in feeling on the score of faith, given only moderate foresight and practical wisdom. As "Suaviter in Modo" has made so clear, the outlook for Irish Ireland is by no means satisfactory. If Irish be not made one of the obligatory subjects of the matriculation programme, Irish Ireland, in the fight which is ahead of her, will, of course, have been worsted utterly and finally; and, from her special point of view, she need never hope anything from the University. It will simply proceed to co-operate, with quite exceptional advantages, in the Anglicisation of Ireland. All this is so obvious, that to elaborate it would be so much waste of space.

What, then, are the chances of making Irish an obligatory subject for matriculation? Candidly they are rather small. A strenuous agitation would, of course, wholly change the outlook; but there is no present symptom of such an agitation. The Gaelic League is very slow, if not indeed afraid, to face the question. The newspapers, with hardly an exception, are dumb; and so are the popular organisations. Just now it is not clear that so obviously essential a demand will even be formally made.

Let us, however, assume that it will. In the absence of a strenuous and widespread popular agitation, what are its

chances? With the Statutory Commission, we do not know; for we cannot tell how it will be constituted. Four of its members will be selected by the Senate, presumably from within its own ranks, and three will be appointed by the Crown. The Crown representatives are not likely to be favourable, to say the least; and looking to the Senate, it is very unlikely that that body, constituted as it is, would send to represent it on the Statutory Commission, four members favourable to Irish Ireland ideals—perhaps not even one. Assuming, therefore, that the Statutory Commission should have anything to say to such questions as the requirements for Matriculation, it is clear that, unless as a result of compulsion, nothing need be hoped for from that body.

What of the Senate itself? Amongst its members are seven Protestants. This I mention, not to complain of it, for Irishmen would grudge some of them no honour that could possibly be conferred upon them. But as there are to be seven Protestants upon the Senate of one of the Universities, why only one Catholic on the other? This arrangement constitutes by implication the greatest insult that has been offered to Irish Catholics in our time. I know not who is really responsible for it; and, of course, I regard as a joke the statement that the religious profession of the proposed Senators is not thoroughly well known. But the Catholics of Ireland are not worth their salt, and Ireland's representatives on the floor of the British House of Commons deserve that their names should be eternally execrated, if they do not demand and insist that upon the Senate of the proposed Belfast University there shall be at least as many Catholics as there will be Protestants on the Senate of the contemplated University for Catholics. Surely Irish Catholics are not going to silently endure for ever the arrogant and audacious assumption that Irish Protestants are a superior race.

To return to the composition of the proposed Senate: A careful examination of the list does not hold out much promise to Irish Ireland. There are several names there; and, Irish ideals apart, one gasps with wonder at why they were ever thought of as members of an educational body. Then I find that the list seems to contain the names of ten members of the medical profession, more than a fourth of the entire Senate: surely that is an outrageously excessive representation for one profession. There are five ecclesiastics, two bishops and three priests; this I regard as, judged by any standard, quite an inadequate representation of the clergy, whose sympathy and co-operation will be so vital to the success of the University. No representation is secured to them as a matter of right. Of that personally I make no complaint; but they ought at all events to have reasonable representation as a matter of fact.

Scrutinising the list of the proposed Senate with the utmost care, I can, giving as many of them as possible the full benefit of the doubt, find only fourteen who, in any sense whatever, may be claimed as known supporters of Irish Ireland; and amongst these are not a few whose sympathy is only nominal or merely sentimental. But counting every possible supporter of Irish Ireland ideals, we find that the West Britons and neutrals are a decided majority. These latter, failing an agitation, are sure to be solidly ranged against the demand that the national language be made a compulsory subject for matriculation. Of the rather heterogeneous Irish Ireland minority, there are some, it cannot be doubted, who would certainly not support such a demand, and a still larger number who would not fight strenuously and persistently in its favour. I am reluctant to give figures; but I have no doubt that the number of those on the proposed Senate who would make a stubborn fight for the recognition of Irish as an obligatory matriculation subject, and who would if necessary carry the fight from the Senate Hall to the country, is very small indeed. The friends of the language on the Senate, as well as its enemies and the neutrals, need the stimulus of an agitation to make them do the right thing, or to make them do it with a will.

It is invidious to name individuals. But a few particulars will show how really necessary agitation is to secure that, in this matter, the proper policy be from the outset adopted. There are five ecclesiastics on the proposed Senate. At first sight one would say that every one of them ought certainly and unerringly be on the Irish Ireland side. Two of them, if they join the Senate, will undobutedly be the two most powerful and influential Senators on the popular side. They have long identified themselves in the strongest and most public manner possible with the Gaelic League and its work. Twelve months ago their support of the demand that Irish should appear in the Matriculation Programme as an obligatory subject, would have been commonly, if not universally, taken for granted: not so at present. Both are members of the body that recently degraded Irish in Maynooth; and one of them, who is bishop of the most Irish-speaking diocese in Ireland, followed up the action of the Episcopal body by dispensing from the study of Irish all the students of his diocese who made application to him. As to the three other ecclesiastics who are, it seems, to be members of the Senate, one has, as far as is known, never identified himself with the language movement in any way; the second has more than once spoken sympathetically of it; and of the third, it will suffice to say that it was at his instance, and because of his alarmist representations, the Bishops lowered the status of Irish in Maynooth. Now, if misgivings as to the attitude of the Prelates

alluded to is justified, there is much more justification for uneasiness as to the attitude of the other proposed clerical Senators, and perhaps still more justification for not being quite sure of the attitude of the lay Irish Ireland members, with the exception of a few who are leaders of the language movement.

The need of prompt, strenuous, and decisive action need not, therefore, be emphasised. If the leaders of the language movement do not at once give the country a lead in this matter, then the rank and file must take spontaneous action. They must act, too, with promptitude and vigour. Delay is dangerous, but half-heartedness would be fatal.

THE FUTURE OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE IN OUR HIGHER EDUCATION.*

BY

COMME IL FAUT.

Irish Ireland is confronted with a situation of the gravest character. In the clearest terms possible a question of immense and pressing importance has been definitely raised. What is to be the status of the national language in the new University designed to meet the higher educational needs of the vast majority of the people of this island? If the claims of the Irish language were certain to receive due weight and attention, if the practical solution of the question were entrusted to a body, whether large or small, possessed of national insight, inspired by genuine national ideals, animated by enlightened national sympathies and instincts, no one could doubt what the answer would be. Such unfortunately is not likely to be the case. Whether the future of the national language in our system of higher education is to be determined by the Senate or by the Statutory Commission, the prospect is in either case gloomy, and the worst misgivings unavoidable.

The official list of the proposed Senate is now before the public, and a glance through the names suffices to dispel all expectations from that quarter. The Senate aforesaid is about as heterogeneous and motley a collection of individuals as could well be imagined. Nor is its heterogenousness its most striking characteristic. With trifling and obvious exceptions, from amongst the various classes represented in the list, those have been selected whose opportunism is most pronounced and whose grasp of principle and devotion thereto

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* *The Leader*, May 16, 1908.

appears to be least virile. Want of backbone seems to have been a high recommendation; whilst, in at least a good half-dozen cases, the appointments, on every ground, merely invite laughter. In the prospective Senate, West Britonism, snobbery, opportunism, place-hunting, and educational know-nothingism are abundantly represented; everything, in fact, except intellectual eminence, enlightened national feeling, discriminating national foresight, a firm grasp of national principle, a high all-round standard of academic distinction, educational experience, or literary attainment. The Senate, as now constituted, seems to represent, in a high degree, the principle of the survival of the most unfitting. From the original lists, which were bad enough, seem to have been eliminated the names of all those to whom any of those singled out for consultation, on what principle nobody seems to know, raised any objection. This goes a long way to explain why the list is now what we know it to be. At the hands of the West Britons and of the tame and toadyish crowd who worship at their shrine, all those who would have commanded popular confidence were quite sure of attention; but upon the nonentities and flunkeys no one thought it worth while to waste powder and shot. Nobody objected to them because no one feared anything from them for good or evil. In the general massacre of the men and women of ideas, principles, and unequivocal popular sympathies, a few escaped. To make a universal holocaust would not have suited. Some few there were to touch whom might even have been dangerous. To the wishes of the carefully selected censors of the lists, unqualified deference was, perhaps, in some cases not shown. The names of those who have survived are now known to the public. What the official published list is we are all aware. That no change of importance is any longer likely we may also feel assured. And from the Senate as it is, if the determination of the matter should rest with it, it were folly to expect that the national language would receive the consideration that is rightfully its due, unless its claims should be supported by a popular demand sufficient in volume and determination to cow the Senate into at least a momentary mood of patriotism.

More than once already has it been pointed out that the Statutory Commission most probably, and not the Senate, is to have the determination of the fate of the national language in the new University. According to the Charter, the Statutory Commission is to consist of seven members, three to be nominees of the Crown, and four to be elected by the Senate. A body consisting of Crown nominees, and of members chosen by a body so unsatisfactory from the Irish Ireland point of view, as well as on broad national and educational lines, cannot possibly be satisfactory to popular opinion.

Worse still. It is now being whispered about the city that the Government has changed its mind about the appointment of the Statutory Commission, and that it is to consist wholly of Crown nominees. This, if true, has advantages and disadvantages. It will prevent an undignified scramble for election to the Commission on the part of the Constituent Colleges and of the various bodies and classes whose interests are thought to be involved. The general interests of education are likely to gain thereby. But for Irish Ireland, if there be any foundation for the rumour, it almost certainly means a change from bad to worse.

What then is likely to happen? As soon as the Bill passes, the Senate, very little or in no wise changed, will meet and confer. The Statutory Commission will be constituted, either by Crown nomination alone or by nomination and election. Building operations will begin, and the Statutory Commission will enter upon its work. Its powers will be enormous and its work manifold. Only one phase of its work need at present engage our attention. To it will be assigned by the Charter the duty of drawing up the General Statutes of the University; and the Statutes, acording to the Charter, are to determine the studies and subjects required for the Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates, etc., of the University, as well, doubtless, as those required for Matriculation. When the Statutes come into full force, they will be just as binding on the University, on the Senate, on the Colleges and their Governing Bodies, on everybody connected with the University and its Constituent Colleges, as the Universities Act or the Charter itself. Until revoked or changed or modified with all the necessary legal formalities, every one of the Statutes will bind the University absolutely.

Suppose, then, that the University Statutes do not make Irish an obligatory subject for matriculation, in what position will Irish Ireland and its representatives on the Senate find themselves? The Statutory Commission having done its work, will disappear. The Statutes will have acquired the force of law. No subjects can be made obligatory for matriculation except those which are so described in the Statutes. To make Irish obligatory, if not so made at the outset, will necessitate an application to Parliament, or the appointment of a Special Commission, unless the power of changing the Statutes is by the Act or by the Charter or by the Statutes themselves formally vested in the Senate. The Senate may, in course of time, become as popular and as national as imagination can picture it. It may do many things. But one thing it cannot do. Of itself, by the exercise of its own powers, without the intervention and concurrence of a foreign Government and Parliament, it most probably cannot make any radical change in the status of the national language, or assign it its proper place. An appeal to Parliament for that

purpose is sure to meet with determined opposition, will be thwarted and obstructed in every possible way, so much so that all but the most strenuous will elect to let the University continue to be a West Briton and Anglicising institution rather than embark on a course which most people will be disposed to regard as hopeless.

In the choice which Irish Ireland will soon have to make, it is best that all the facts and difficulties should be looked at straight in the face. Either the Irish language will be regarded as indigenous, and will in respect of status and otherwise be treated accordingly; or it will be regarded as an exotic, and will from time to time receive more or less attention according to varying circumstances, as, for instance, the fluctuations in the *personnel* of the Senate. Its national and historical claims will either be fully recognised, or it will be degraded to the level of a foreign or of a dead language, whilst pride of place and power will be accorded the language of the conqueror. Such are the alternatives. The national language, then, will either be made obligatory for matriculation, and will in all the Colleges have a position of the first importance assigned to it, and so will have its claims adequately recognised; or it will be a merely optional subject at matriculation, reduced to the level of foreign and dead languages, degraded in status, excluded from the place which rightfully belongs to it, treated as a pariah or tolerated as a mere exotic. These, let it again be repeated, are the alternatives. If Irish is not made an obligatory subject for Matriculation, it shall have been deprived of its rightful place and status; and, no matter how national the University or the Senate may become, it can subsequently have justice done it, if at all, only with the greatest difficulty and by the intervention of a foreign power.

What, then, is to be done? At present the obvious course is to concentrate all the force of Irish Ireland and all the forces it can command or influence on getting Irish made an obligatory Matriculation subject. This policy cannot be adopted too soon, nor can it be too strenuously pursued. Every step that would in any way tend to the attainment of this object should be taken without delay. The attitude of the Gaelic League is quite unaccountable. It is to be hoped that its official organ, whose utterances seem to indicate a lowering of the flag, does not reflect the attitude of the Organisation and of its Governing Body. If it does, it is a bad business. Public opinion, in every form in which it can be expressed, needs just now to be organised and to be rallied to the support of the demand that Irish be made, as a vital preliminary step towards securing full justice for it, an obligatory matriculation subject. For Irish Ireland, that is unmistakably the need of the hour.

If, all the omens notwithstanding, those who are to have the carriage of this matter, should act as self-respecting Irishmen, and should accord the national language its rightful place, well and good. Irish Ireland will doubtless be prepared to tender them a frank apology for ever having distrusted them. But assuming, which is the more likely, that Irish Ireland should fail—what then? It will, at all events, have failed honourably. It will have done its utmost to assert an essential principle. It will not have compromised where compromise means the sacrifice of the whole Gaelic League case. It can consistently and with increased prestige renew the struggle for the fitting recognition of the national language on every occasion that may offer.

Should it fail, certain measures will become necessary as a matter of course. The representatives of Irish Ireland on the Senate, especially those of them who have been appointed owing to their positions in the Gaelic League, will have at once to retire; or, if they do not, it must be made perfectly clear that they no longer have any claim to represent Irish Ireland thereon. When the period of office of the original Senate expires, every seat in the Senate that is to be filled by election, no matter by what section of the electorate, must be contested on behalf of Irish Ireland, and with a view to securing for the national language its rightful place; and this not merely at the first election, but at every subsequent election, as long as may be necessary. Cost what it may, those who take sides against the legitimate claims of the language must, if possible, be ousted from the Senate. In public life, and in matters of public policy, mistakes cannot be condoned; otherwise there would be no protection for public interests. In such cases, good faith cannot be admitted to be a valid defence. It is what is done that is of importance, not the motives that inspire it. National recreancy, no matter by what specious excuses it may be sought to cloak it, cannot be allowed to go unpunished.

Another consequence will follow. It is now quite manifest that an effort will be made to induce County Councils and other local bodies to rally in one way or another to the support of the University. Here also must Irish Ireland employ all its power with County Councils, and at County Council elections, to withhold local support from the University as long as it is governed by a West Briton Senate, which denies the national language its rightful place, and which really, if not professedly, governs the University at all points in the interests of the Anglicisation of the country. Nor must there be any lifting of the ban till the need for it shall have ceased. If Irish Ireland adopt this policy, it will triumph sooner or later. Its triumph may, indeed, be deferred, but it is certain to come. But if it lower its flag, if it compromise where com-

promise spells ruin, it will have lost utterly and for ever; and, worse still, it will have lost with every circumstance of ignominy and degradation.

The time is one to try men's souls, to show forth of what metal they are made, and so is the situation. It is a time, not for diplomacy, but for strenuous effort and unyielding adherence to principle. To the puny-souled, to minds cast in the huckstering mould, to budding diplomatists, the temptation will be well nigh irresistible to compromise where compromise cannot but be disastrous, to sacrifice principle for a seeming immediate advantage, no matter how paltry. In those who shape the policy, and guide the counsels of the Gaelic League, wisdom and foresight and integrity were never more needed than at this juncture. Staunch adhesion to principle must ultimately triumph; compromise will be both fatal and disgraceful.

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Since the above was written, I have read an article in which a rather flabby attempt is made to defend the position, that it is the constitution of the Senate that is the really important point, not the provision made for Irish in the University at the outset. The writer makes the following extraordinary statements: "Now, the constitution of the Senate matters everything, for it is the Senate which is to determine the position of the Irish language. The position of Irish for the first five years will be fixed by the Statutory Commission. . . . After five years the Senate will have absolute power to make such provisions as it likes with regard to the position of Irish." How absurd all this seems to be will be manifest from what has been stated earlier in this article. The General Statutes are to determine the subjects and general conditions for Degrees, etc.; so the Charter directs. The Statutory Commission is to frame the General Statutes. Is it seriously contended that the General Statutes are to remain in force only for five years? This, on the face of it, is in the last degree improbable; and the Charter furnishes not a particle of justification for any such inference. Perhaps the writer has information not available to those who have to rely on the Press for their information. The object of the directions given to the Statutory Commission seems to be rather to tie the hands of the Senate, lest perchance it should ever become too national, than to permit it the freedom which the permanent Governing Body of the University ought to have. The writer of the article seems to be making a desperate effort to wriggle out of a difficulty. Elsewhere he has written: "The Senate is not . . . to have the drawing up of the Statutes of the University. . . . Some sort of a Commission . . . . . is, no doubt, necessary; but to

hand over to a body consisting of three direct Crown nominees, and of four others nominated by a body itself nominated by the Crown, the framing of the whole code of University Statutes, including, apparently, the Statutes determining the position of the national language, and of Irish studies generaly in the new University—this is a proposal which . . . . should be strenuously fought. What guarantee have we, of Irish Ireland, that these seven Crown nominees will as much as consider the national language from the proper point of view?" How the writer can reconcile these two positions is best known to himself.

THE MINIMUM.*

BY

Cuṁraċ an tSeagaiṫ.

In one of the Waterford weeklies I have just read a report of a discussion which recently took place at a meeting of the local branch of the Gaelic League. With the many minor details of the discussion I do not propose to deal. The future of the national language in Irish University education was, however, considered at some length; and on that subject I should like to make some observations.

The report of the discussion was apparently very condensed, perhaps necessarily so. In such circumstances one is naturally slow to criticise, for there is ever a danger, in cases of the kind, that one may be criticising without being accurately or fully informed. Be that as it may, the subject discussed on the occasion referred to is much too important to leave it exactly where it was left by the meeting.

As far as one can judge from the reports, the discussion was in no way very satisfactory. It led nowhere in particular. At the best, it left the question where it found it; it certainly did nothing to advance it. Whatever else it may have done it certainly was not helpful to those in quest of enlightenment and information. Let me then try to put the question at issue in a clear light.

That the Universities Bill will pass seems for the moment most likely. Should it pass, two new Universities will be

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* Sinn Féin, May 16, 1908.

established in this country, one having its seat in Dublin, the other in Belfast. The former will have three constituent colleges, one in Dublin, a second in Cork, and a third in Galway. When the new Universities begin work, there must, among other things, be a curriculum; there must be a teaching vehicle; there must be conditions for admission to the University—in other words, for Matriculation. Of those having national views or sympathies who are destined to receive a higher education, the vast majority will doubtless be educated in the University having its seat in Dublin.

Is the Gaelic League to take no notice whatever of the establishment of this University? All Nationalists will agree, or ought to agree, that, were it possible, the Irish language should therein be the vehicle of teaching; but it seems to be universally agreed that it is not at present possible. Indeed, at the Waterford meeting it was admitted that it was not possible; that at present all the students could not be sent up to the University fitted to attend lectures given exclusively in Irish. The point, therefore, need not be argued.

We shall get over all that in a few years, it is said. Only give us ten years, and we shall have the students prepared. Of what earthly use for our present purposes is it that ten years hence the facts will, it is hoped, be other than they are at present? The question is not, what will be feasible in ten years' time, or what we should then do and demand. The real question and the question of urgent importance is, what is practicable now, what are we justified in demanding, and what is it our duty to demand? Irish being the national language, it is our duty to demand at once and as a right all that it is feasible to concede. Because for ten years or more we cannot possibly hope to secure for the national language what would be an absolutely satisfactory and ideal status, who will say that we ought to do nothing at all in the interval, or that we should be justified in doing nothing? This is where the barrenness of the Waterford discussion is displayed, if one can rely on the report; for it seemed to imply that we should aim at nothing until we can secure perfection.

If we aim at nothing now, we cannot in ten years' time, nor indeed in a century, strive for a perfect arrangement. Time will not stand still for us, and for us alone. The University settlement may, indeed, be delayed; but it certainly will not be delayed solely to afford us ten years during which to prepare for its advent. Shall we do nothing at present, or in the interval to gain a foothold in the University? There are very many who would be glad to see us do nothing, to see us keep out of it, to see the field abandoned to the forces of West Britonism and Anglicisation. But should we yield to any temptation of the kind we shall

have betrayed and wantonly sacrificed the interests of the national language and the highest interests of the Irish nation.

It is then our duty to make what use we can of existing opportunities and possibilities, both inside the University and without. The only question for us is, what is possible? To ask for more, as an immediate concession, would only make us ridiculous; to ask for less, or to be content with less, would be gross national treachery. By all means, let us keep the ideal arrangement, "the larger policy," in view; but let us not, because that policy is not immediately realisable, exhibit ourselves to the world as utter dolts. If we demand what is feasible, and insist upon its concession, it can be made use of to expedite the coming of the day when the ideal arrangement will be feasible; any other course will but defer it, perhaps indefinitely.

What, then, is the utmost which is at present feasible, and which should, therefore, be the minimum of our demand? This question I think it well to answer in detail:—

1. No student should be allowed to enter the University and become an Undergraduate thereof without successfully undergoing an examination in Irish. In other words, Irish should be an essential subject for Matriculation; and the examination should be oral as well as written. A merely written examination would be quite useless. Indeed, the examination in all living languages should at entrance to the University be oral as well as written. From this regulation there should be no exception; but in practice it might be necessary before rigidly enforcing such a regulation to give two or three years' notice of it.

That Irish should be obligatory for Matriculation should, therefore, be our first and essential demand. To concede it is perfectly feasible. It must be conceded; for to abate this claim in the slightest degree is to put Irish merely on the same level, and assign it the same status, as foreign or dead languages. To that course Irish Ireland never can consent. No matter how long or how weary the struggle may be, there can be no yielding on this point. To yield here is to abandon the historical and special claims of the language; in fact, to yield up the fortress absolutely.

2. Whether Irish should be obligatory within the University, and how long, depends upon whether any other subjects are to be obligatory, and how long. If any special subjects are obligatory at any examination subsequent to Matriculation, then Irish should be obligatory. At no point must it be placed in a secondary or inferior position; of course, if no

special subjects are obligatory after Matriculation there is no reason why Irish should be. In other words, if absolute choice be allowed, if a certain number of subjects be merely required from amongst those in the programme, then no one would expect that Irish should in a University be singled out for special treatment. At present, for example, English, Latin, Mathmatics, and Natural Philosophy are obligatory subjects for the First Arts Examination in the Royal University. If this precedent be followed in the new University, then Irish must be an obligatory subject for the First Arts Examination likewise. But the Royal University precedent may not be followed at all. The number of examinations prior to graduation may not be the same as in the Royal University, and the principle of making specified subjects obligatory may not be adhered to.

3. In the grouping of subjects for Degrees in Arts, as well as for all examinations in Arts, care should be taken that in no respect and in no case should Irish be placed at any disadvantage. The grouping should be so elastic that every Undergraduate, no matter what Group he may wish to select, should find it feasible to take Irish as one of his subjects, and should be at no disadvantage in so doing.

4. There should be a faculty of Irish studies. In other words, in all the Colleges of the University ample provision in the matter of Fellowships, Studentships, and other Prizes should be made for encouraging Irish studies; Professorships and Lecturerships should be founded, and such other provision for teaching as might be found necessary, should be made in respect of Old and Middle Irish and Celtic Philology, Modern Irish, Irish Art and Archæology, Irish History, ancient and modern, and all other branches of native learning and culture.

5. From the very outset, provision should be made for the delivery of lectures on at least some one subject in the national language. This is a point of vital importance.

Now, I submit that this is a far better and wiser policy than the policy of *laissez faire*, which seems to have been favoured at the Gaelic League meeting in Waterford; nay, the only sane policy. It in nowise conflicts with the constant and strenuous advocacy and pursuit of the larger policy. On the contrary, it is bound, in daily increasing measure, to help towards its realisation. But whilst all this is so, it is important above all things to remember that the acceptance of less than what is here outlined, more especially the abatement of the smallest tittle of the demand that Irish should be an essential subject for Matriculation, would be a base betrayal of all that the Gaelic League stands for, and an implied but unmistakable avowal of the acceptance in perpetuity of a position of inferiority for the national language.

THE UNIVERSITIES BILL: THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND THE SENATE.*

BY

PATRITIUS.

The demand that the national language, as a condition precedent to having its rightful place accorded to it within the University, should be made an obligatory subject for matriculation, has at length become fully articulate. When first advanced, it was received with undisguised amazement by the prospective Senators and others; later on it was treated with scorn and derision. This attitude is already a thing of the past. Though no doubt reluctantly, the Senators that are to be, seem to be gradually realising that the aforesaid demand is ever so much more serious than they had imagined. They have, consequently, had to revise their outlook.

The demand is no longer a thing *pour rire*. It is a stern and unmistakable reality, though probably, to the majority of the Senate, a very unpleasant reality. It promises to give rise to one of the most strenuous agitations that we have witnessed for a considerable time. For this welcome state of things, it cannot be said that the Gaelic League is entitled to any considerable degree of credit. Seeing that it is the official and accredited guardian of the interests of the language, this latter fact is somewhat surprising. But if the League has done much less than its share, the same cannot be said of the *Leader*. It has contributed rather more than its share to the much-needed work of instructing the public as to the issues at stake, and of rousing it to a fitting sense of their importance.

If one may rely upon information emanating from seemingly well-informed sources, it is being whispered about on behalf, apparently, of the future Senators, that, should Irish Ireland be content to have the national language made obligatory for matriculation at the end of five years, notice to that effect having been previously given, the proposal would probably meet with no opposition. If there be any warrant for this statement, the Senate is not quite without the pale of salvation—I mean, of course, the majority thereof, for the majority, for all practical purposes, is the Senate.

I do not, of course, undertake to vouch for the accuracy of what is being stated. What I wish to do is merely to say that Irish Ireland should not allow itself to be beguiled by this proposal to have Irish made obligatory for matriculation in five years' time.

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* *The Leader*, May 30, 1908.

Irish cannot, of course, be made obligatory at once. Some notice must necessarily be given; but five years' notice is absolutely unnecessary. Three years' notice at most would be quite ample. When the National Board, for example, recently thought of making a second language obligatory for admission to the training colleges, it fixed the opening of 1911 as the date at which the regulation should come into force. If it be agreed to make Irish obligatory after the lapse of three years from the first meeting of the Senate after the dissolution of the Royal University, I think an understanding can be come to on that point; but, of course, the other demands of Irish Ireland still remain. But on a five years' basis negotiations are impossible. The time is too long; and the proposal looks too like a ruse on the part of the original nominated Senate to shelve the matter during its own period of office. When the Senate comes to be elected, it is safe to say that their places will know many of the original Senators no more, more particularly if an unyielding opposition is offered to the claims of the Irish language. That they should be prepared to make a concession which should not take effect until after their places should have been taken by an elected Senate, which probably would at once concede the demands of Irish Ireland, is not exactly a concession to boast of. If it is true that they are prepared to make a concession in respect of Matriculation, let them substitute three years for five; such an offer will be of value, and the time specified will be ample.

It is not at all certain that the statement of the scouts—for the Senate seems to have scouts as well as Mr. Birrell—is worthy of absolute credence. It is possible that there may be no reality in it—indeed, it may well be that this is highly probable.

Whilst, therefore, prepared to negotiate, Irish Ireland should be cautious and somewhat suspicious. It should not forget what the Senate will be, and what the Statutory Commission cannot well fail to be, and how little hope and confidence either seems to justify. To inform and rouse the country, and to make every preparation possible for whatever may befall, is not only the best policy, but the only safe and wise policy. Formulating demands without bringing their necessity and the feasibility of their concession clearly home to Irish Ireland, and rallying it to the support of them, will not make much impression upon the Senate, or on the Statutory Commission, or on anybody. A writer, who has a preternaturally grave way of uttering portentous nothings, would still have us believe that he has "been working on sound lines in directing attention primarily to the powers and *personnel* of the Senates and Commissions of the two Universities." Any one who, at this stage, could make such a statement seems capable of any folly. The *personnel* of the

Senate, be it again repeated, is practically fixed already. It is barely possible that the Senate may be slightly enlarged, though, to say the least, it is highly improbable; but the names of the proposed Senators have been officially announced, and it is now practically impossible to withdraw any of them. It does seem rather a waste of time to concern ourselves with the *personnel* of a body which we cannot in any way hope to change or modify for five years All that can be done is to endeavour to wrest our demands from it, in so far as it lies with it to concede them. And there is but one way to effect this—by organising the forces of Irish Ireland. If we can bend the Senate to our will, we may then hope to prevail with the Statutory Commission; not otherwise.

THE UNIVERSITIES BILL—AND AFTER.*

BY

Roʃ Ruaḋ.

The atmosphere of Irish Ireland, quite recently and for a considerable time so sluggish, is at present quite electrical; this is, undoubtedly, all to the good. Even the Coisde Gnotha has, at least for the time being, been galvanized into strenuousness; having all the delightful charm of variety, this also is indeed welcome. As far as the Gaelic League was concerned, there was a few weeks ago, no University question which even the most discerning outsider could bring within his ken; now the University question, in its special bearings upon the national language, is almost the only subject for which Gaelic Leaguers can spare a thought; even the great Fees' controversy has, for the moment at least, passed into oblivion.

Considering the turn that affairs have so suddenly and unexpectedly taken, it is, of course, very necessary to make it appear that the Coisde Gnotha has not been nodding, like the immortal bard who sang "The Tale of Troy Divine." Therefore, we gradually learn that more than once statements were sent to Mr. Birrell, statements of which he seems to have taken no account. If anything could have brought home to the Coisde Gnotha that it was proceeding on hopelessly wrong lines, this ought to have done so. To prove the activity and far-sightedness of the Coisde Gnotha, certain resolutions are now being exhumed from back numbers and

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* *The Leader*, June 6, 1908.

minute-books, resolutions which attracted no attention, gave no lead, roused no enthusiasm, because they were not followed up in business-like and vigorous fashion. One writer, whose writings show him to be a staunch supporter of the Coisde Gnotha, can find nothing better to urge in defence of the Coisde than this: "The Coisde Gnotha, indeed, might have spoken definitely a little earlier; but it has a host of very important things to do, and, as we all know, its Education Committee had tackled this troublesome question at its bidding some months ago."

Whatever may be said of the Coisde Gnotha's activity or inactivity hitherto, it is now active enough on the University question. What its Education Committee failed to accomplish during the months that it had the University question in hands, a few anonymous scribes succeeding in accomplishing in a few weeks. What they undertook was not particularly arduous, it is true; but, whether arduous or not, they succeeded in a very short time in making Irish Ireland realise that the University settlement had a very intimate and important bearing on the fortunes of the national language. This roused the Coisde Gnotha. When, at length, it found its voice, it became quite apparent that whosoever drafted its resolutions had made a very diligent and not unprofitable study of what had been written on the subject. Only one of its resolutions could make any claim to originality, and that happens to be the only one amongst them whose wisdom is doubtful. At all events, a prominent member of the Coisde Gnotha, who is a Senator-Elect, and not one of the refractory minority, treats it to a douche of cold water in the current issue of the official organ of the Gaelic League.

Of the Coisde Gnotha's present activity, there is no doubt. The constitution of the Gaelic League provides expressly for special meetings of the Airdfheis. No such meeting has hitherto been summoned; but, if the summoning of such a meeting is not justified at this juncture, it is impossible to conceive how or when it could possibly be justified. Anyhow, it has become inevitable; and when the Coisde Gnotha realised that it had become absolutely inevitable, it fastened upon a flimsy technicality to appropriate to itself the credit of summoning a meeting which it could no longer oppose. To rehabilitate its rather damaged prestige, a policy of log-rolling has been inaugurated. Under distinguished Coisde Gnotha auspices, a resolution was recently adopted at a meeting of the Cill Sgire Craobh, approving of "the manly stand taken by the Coisde Gnotha on behalf of the Irish language in the New Universities." On the day on which this resolution appeared in the daily papers, a resolution,

similarly worded, and probably sped under similar auspices, was adopted by the Mount Bellew Branch. That this resolution will travel far is not improbable. No one will grudge the Coisde Gnotha any increase of glory or prestige such a resolution may secure for it.

The main point has been gained, at all events. The country generally has been roused; the issues at stake are pretty well understood. The Coisde Gnotha has shed its apathy, and has learned its lesson well.

A great deal of loose thinking still prevails, and no small share of foolish talking and writing. The proposal that an attempt should be made to have the status of the National language secured by the Act, or by the Charter, or by a Special Instruction to the Senate, has been specially denounced. On what ground? On the absurd ground that we should trust Irishmen, and not appeal to the British Parliament to coerce them. If we are so sensitive about appealing to the British Parliament, why have we had recourse to that Parliament at all on this University question? Why strain at the gnat, and swallow the camel? The Senate is Mr. Birrell's Senate, not ours. If the Senate were our choice, if we had any control over it, if we had any sort of confidence in it, the whole situation would be altered. Mr. Birrell is giving us a Senate preponderatingly consisting of West Britons, snobs, flunkeys, and deadheads—such a Senate as we should never dream of selecting if we had any choice. If we may appeal to him for a University, why may we not appeal to him to instruct his own West-Briton Senate to do justice to the national language? Great, certainly, is *raimeis*, whosoever may be its prophet.

Much has been written about the Senate; it is doubtful if anything that could be said about it would do it anything like justice. A letter, which appears in the current issue of the official organ of the Gaelic League, casts a rather lurid light upon its *personnel*. The writer represents the Irish-speaking City of Galway on the floor of the British House of Commons. He also represents the culture of one of the ancient English Universities. He is a Gaelic Leaguer, and a prominent member of the Coisde Gnotha—not one of the minority either, but ever on the right side. He does not approve of "insistence on Irish as a qualification for matriculation, and for the earlier stages in the curriculum." Hear him further:—"I do not myself agree with the resolution, and would prefer to make two languages obligatory—one Latin, the other Irish or Greek. An alternative should, I hold, be given. *But the difference between these two proposals is not very material.*'" (Italics mine.)

Let Irish Ireland ponder well these words; they merit its close attention and study. A good deal of abuse has been

heaped upon the heretics who have demanded that Irish should, in the new Universities, be assigned a status, at least as satisfactory as that which Latin enjoys in the Royal University. This has not been the demand made in the *Leader*. It was there demanded that it should be assigned a status as high as that assigned to any other subject in the curriculum; that it should be obligatory for entrance to the University, and as long afterwards as any other subject is obligatory. Such demands, when advanced by those who are not of the Coisde Gnotha, are anathema; they are not at all advanced enough. But now, behold, one of the most prominent members of the Coisde Gnotha, one of those future Senators who are to safeguard the interests of Irish Ireland, one, too, who is intended, it is said, for a place on the Statutory Commission, makes an amended demand. What is it? That Irish be merely an alternative or competitive subject; *that in the new Universities it should have assigned to it exactly the same status as that at present assigned to it in the Royal University*!! For this, then, have we been fighting and agitating; for this is the Airdfheis to be specially convened—not to raise the national language up, but to urge that it be not depressed. "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" If such be the muddled view of one of the official champions of the national language in the Senate, what of the great majority of his colleagues? And remember that "the difference between these two proposals is not very material." The difference not very material between making Irish obligatory, and making it a merely alternative subject.

Although I do not believe that there is the least deordination, if we are justified in applying to Parliament at all, in asking and urging that an Instruction be given to Mr. Birrell's nominated Senate to do justice to the national language, nevertheless, I do not hold that, if the effort to get that instruction should fail, the Gaelic Leaguers on the Senate should withdraw. If the effort to get the instruction should fail, then the Senate should be given a chance, and so should the Statutory Commission. Even though they are Mr. Birrell's nominees, and in no wise responsible to the Irish people, they would, I suppose, claim that they are Irishmen; they should have an opportunity of proving whether there is any substance in the claim. But, if they refuse to concede the demands of Irish Ireland, I cannot conceive how any self-respecting Irish Irelander could any longer remain a member of the original Senate. The only course open to Irish Ireland Senators will be to appeal from the Senate to the country, and to devote their energies to preventing the hostile Senators from returning to their places when their original term of office shall have expired.

I have read a document published over the name of the Vice-President of the Gaelic League. In most respects I have, I think, as much respect for the writer as has anybody else. But this document does not increase my respect for him. What he writes is in the abstract unexceptionable; but in view of the concrete situation with which Irish Ireland is face to face, it is about on a par with the Waterford resolutions, or the King Charles' head drivel of the official organ about the *personnel* of the Senate. It is magnificent, but, unfortunately, it is not business. To talk of liberty, where subjects do not start on a footing of equality, where there will be preferences, where it is as certain as the rise of to-morrow's sun that some subjects will be obligatory, where the national language is in so many ways so heavily handicapped, is mere moonshine, and rather fine-drawn moonshine to boot.

It is quite plain that the Airdfheis when it meets has its work cut out for it, and so has Irish Ireland for some time to come. Should either fail to realise its responsibilities, and likewise fail to show itself equal to them, it will not have been for any want of having the issues put clearly before it. For its part in this work, which has been considerable, the *Leader* merits gratitude, and it has the gratitude of one Irish Irelander at least.

THE AIRDFHEIS AND THE UNIVERSITIES BILL—AND AFTER.*

BY

ISLAND MAGEE.

The special meeting of the Airdfheis is over. All things considered, its proceedings and findings are not unsatisfactory. It might, in sooth, very easily have done better. Its findings lack definiteness and strenuousness. The note of determination and combativeness, which the circumstances obliged one to look for, is utterly and painfully lacking; and the same note was equally absent from the proceedings of the meeting, if one may judge from the summary report thereof supplied to the Press. The spirit that breathes in the resolutions is assuredly not the spirit that nerves men for battle, nor that which leads to victory and glory.

The Airdfheis then might have done better; but, all things considered, the general opinion will probably be that it has done better than could have been expected. The moment it became evident that it would have to be called together the

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* Sinn Féin, June 20, 1908.

air was rendered hideous with appeals, shrieked in every note of the gamut, all directed to one object—that the issues should be prejudged, that the freedom of the delegates should be morally and practically restricted to the utmost, that all the issues, instead of being honestly left open, should be virtually resolved into a vote of confidence in the honesty and good faith of the leaders of the Gaelic League and of the dominant section of the Coisde Gnotha. The editor of the official organ of the League, aided by some of his contributors, correspondents, and others, indulged in a perfect orgie of slander, accusation, misrepresentation, and vituperation; charged most of those who dared to have an opinion of their own, or who thought that the occasion was essentially one for a special meeting of the Airdfheis, with the design of wrecking the Gaelic League, of nursing the most insensate ambitions, of being actuated in their every thought and word and deed by the worst and most discreditable motives. The result of such tactics was, of course, anticipated by those who employed them. Composed as the Airdfheis is of delegates brought from afar, and coming together so rarely, the result could very easily have been prognosticated, for it was inevitable. There was never any danger of the League, of course. It would be a poor compliment to the intelligence of those who roared themselves hoarse, shrieking to all and sundry to save it, to imagine for a moment that they believed it in danger. Not so those who mustered to the Convention. Many, if not most of these, believed what they were told. How could they be supposed to know that it is not the League that was in danger, but the *amour propre* of a coterie? So they came up to defend the League, and the one way for them to help in that direction was to vote in all cases and at all hazards with the Coisde Gnotha. They did so, of course; and hence the meeting, though by no means useless, was far less useful than it might have been.

The official resolutions on the University question needed the most careful consideration; they did not receive it. They needed to be modified and strengthened; this was not done Amendment after amendment was voted down, lest the League should be disrupted and any countenance given to the wreckers. So the official resolutions stand. They embody, in a highly diluted form, the substance of what had beforehand been elsewhere put forward and explained as the legitimate claims of the national language. They make no demand of anybody. They merely put on record a series of pious opinions that certain things should be done by somebody or other; but no demand is made, nor is it stated who ought, in the opinion of those who passed the resolutions, to do the things suggested. That is not war. It is not even business. The Chief Secretary, and the Senate, and the Statutory

Commission may well laugh at it all; may, in fact, agree in the abstract that all the things suggested are excellent and should be done some time or other by some person or persons unknown, or perhaps unborn—possibly by a Home Rule Government "in that not far distant day when the Green Flag shall wave in cloudless glory over the old House in College Green."

The Airdfheis has separated; and notwithstanding its having assembled, certain problems remain for solution. It may have restored harmony amongst Gaelic Leaguers. I sincerely hope it has; but it has done nothing and contributed nothing to secure for the national language its rightful place in the future Universities and in the programme for admission thereto. To recall the attention of Irish Ireland to this fact is needful, however unpleasant it may be.

The Airdfheis has met, but the Chief Secretary remains. Yes, he remains; and apparently with the acquiescence of the Irish Party, he has refused even to consider an Instruction to the West Briton Senate of his own special and exclusive choice, to those who in the near future are to be "the trusty and well-beloved sons and daughters" of the British Sovereign, to those who are to strut in their Senatorial plumes by the grace and favour of the same, to do justice to Ireland's historic speech.

The Airdfheis has met; but there is the Statutory Commission. What is Irish Ireland going to do with that body, which, judging by the names already made public, will not include even one genuine Irish Irelander? As regards the Statutory Commission, and how to deal with it, what light or help or leading has the Airdfheis given Irish Ireland? Judging by the published report, not a solitary particle. Irish Ireland has, indeed, fallen upon evil days, when from no quarter apparently can it hope for any real or helpful leadership in regard to a matter so vital to it as the future of the national language in our higher education.

The Airdfheis has met; but there is the prospective Senate, in the main as West Briton, as snobbish, as flunkeyish, as self-seeking, as place-hunting, as title-pursuing, as convention-worshipping, as essentially and radically un-Irish and anti-Irish as ever. The Airdfheis refused to ask the Chief Secretary to issue to such a body an instruction, or direction, or even suggestion, of any kind. Very well. There is the Senate. The delegates have elected to trust to its good-will. They have scornfully repudiated the very idea of coercing it, although knowing it for what it is. But evidently they forgot to decide what was to be done in case the Senate should laugh at the pious opinions expressed in their Resolutions, and pour scorn upon the claims of the national language.

Suppose Irish is not made, after three years at most, an obligatory subject for matriculation, suppose that, within the University, it is not made a compulsory subject, as long as the principle of compulsion applies to other subjects, suppose that the arrangements made for the teaching and encouragement of the language be less, even notably less, than what has been demanded, suppose in a word that the appeal of the Coisde Gnotha and Airdfheis from Mr. Birrell to the Senate, should result in disappointment, and bitter disappointment, what is Irish Ireland going to do? Will anyone seriously contend that, if the claims of the national language are scouted, or if they are but very partially conceded, those Gaelic Leaguers who have been offered places on the Senate, who have been offered those places because of their position in the League, who, apart from their position therein, would not have been even thought of—can it, I repeat, be seriously contended or pretended that they can retain their places with a particle of self-respect or without hopelessly damaging the power and prestige of the Gaelic League?

That some of them, at least, will be very unwilling to retire may be taken for granted. Some people, even estimable people, enjoy such bauble distinctions. They dearly love the empty glory they bring—to have people hanging after them for their votes and influence, and the like. That is not the point. The question is not what the Gaelic League Senators, or some of them, may wish to do, but what the honour and prestige of the Gaelic League require that they should do. And when the claims of the Irish language have been considered, if they be rejected wholly or in the main, how on earth can the Senators who are there solely to assert the claims of the language—how can they virtually acquiesce in such a decision by hanging on to their places for the unexpired portion of their crown-nomination term? If they do anything of the kind their colleagues will scorn them, and no wonder; every honourable and public-spirited man and woman will despise them; and Irish Ireland should repudiate them.

In the eventuality referred to, there is only one course consonant with honour, dignity, and the interests of the language; to shake the dust of the West-British Senate Hall from off their shoes; to quit a place where, during the rule of the nominated Senate, they can do no possible good; to appeal to the patriotism of the country against them; and subsequently to put forth every effort to prevent even one of the anti-Irish majority from ever again entering the Senate Hall as a matter of right.

This problem may, and probably will, have to be solved. The Airdfheis has certainly not solved it, has not contributed one iota towards its solution. Problems, unfortunately, are not solved by shirking them. In the present instance, the

result of shirking a problem that clamoured for solution may not impossibly be the creation of a still greater problem—how the Airdfheis is to recover its forfeited honour and repair its damaged prestige.

The Airdfheis has met; but the member for Galway remains, apparently the only prominent member of the Gaelic League destined for a place on the Statutory Commission. The value to Irish Ireland of Mr. Gwynn's presence on that body we already know. In his opinion the rightful place of the national language in the University and at Matriculation would be that of a competitive or alternative subject. The option, it now appears, would only be between Irish and Greek; but still the fact remains that Mr. Gwynn would relegate Irish to a position subordinate to English, Latin, Mathematics, and Physics; and this proposal of his was supported at the special meeting of the Airdfheis by another member of the Coisde Gnotha who is likewise a prospective member of the Senate. What can Ireland expect from a Statutory Commission on which Irish Ireland's only semi-official representative is to be Stephen Gwynn? Or, indeed, from a Senate two of the members of the small Irish Ireland minority of which are in favour of continuing the national language as an alternative subject?

Just look for a moment at the effect of Mr. Gwynn's proposal. If there is any class more than another whom it is desirable to win for Irish Ireland at all costs that class, I think, is the Irish priesthood. The ecclesiastical students of to-day will constitute the Irish priesthood of to-morrow. Ecclesiastical students have been obliged, are obliged, and will ever be obliged, to study both Latin and Greek. They are necessary studies for them. To give an option between Greek and Irish for matriculation, or subsequently, is to hold out or issue a direct invitation to ecclesiastical students not to study Irish, and to afford a direct incentive to the Seminaries not to teach Irish.

To accuse the Seminaries of neglecting Irish is utter rubbish. The Seminaries prepare students for Maynooth, and they teach exactly what is required for admission to Maynooth. What Maynooth requires for admission is now practically what the Royal University requires for Matriculation—that, plus Greek and Irish; Greek in real earnest, but Irish only on paper. One way, and one way only, is there to get Irish generally taught in the Seminaries and in Irish Secondary Schools in the future; and that is to make it obligatory for Matriculation in the University. But this, be it observed, does not find favour with Mr. Gwynn. It will certainly find favour with Irish Ireland when the matter is clearly understood; nay, it will be regarded by it as a matter affecting not merely the well-being, but the very life of the language.

The conclusion is that the Airdfheis, whilst it may have "a steadying effect," and contribute towards promoting harmony, and accomplish other good in divers ways, has left many things undone, necessary and urgent things, too. This will, I think, be obvious to those who follow me thus far.

THE AIRDFHEIS AND IRISH IN THE UNIVERSITIES.*

BY

HIBERNUS.

The special meeting of the Airdfheis has passed into history. Whatever may be thought of its deliberations and their outcome, it may be claimed for the gathering itself that it has at last cleared the air. At such a juncture as the present that is no small gain. One can now offer a straightforward and reasoned opinion on any of the divers questions that are of concern to Irish Ireland without facing the certain risk of being denounced as a wrecker, or as forming one of a group whose whole policy may be summed up in the words "rule or ruin." This result, in my opinion, more than amply justifies the call for a special meeting of the Airdfheis.

That a feeling of panic pervaded the Airdfheis proceedings should, however, not be forgotten; and looking to results of real value and enduring in their character, this went a long way to make the meeting abortive. Before the delegates there really was but one issue. Had those who mustered in the Large Concert Room of the Rotunda confidence in the honesty and good intentions of their leaders, or were they prepared to allow them, by chicanery and intrigue, to be superseded by ambitious and designing individuals, whose sole object was to capture or wreck their organisation? That issue not merely dwarfed all others, but, in the minds of the delegates, it rendered all other issues for the time being non-existent.

Indeed, right good care was taken beforehand to ensure that result. All the machinery of the League, including the unsparing use of its official organ, was sedulously and unremittingly employed to that end. Thus did it come to pass that the delegates feared that if they swerved even in the slightest degree from supporting the platform of the dominant section of the Coisde Gnotha they might be playing into the hands of those awful "wreckers." Obviously, therefore, the

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* Sinn Féin, June 27, 1908.

only safe course to pursue was at every point to give a thick and thin support to the official Resolutions, to the official Resolutions in their entirety and in their every detail, and to nothing whatever save the official Resolutions. Inevitably this was deemed not only the safest procedure, but the only safe procedure.

So accordingly was it done. The League is now secure. The wreckers have been crushed. Confidence has been voted in the Coisde Gnotha, or, more correctly, in the coterie that dominates it. It would seem, therefore, that now at length it may not be impossible, in a reasoned and more or less detached manner, to discuss Gaelic League affairs on their merits with some hope of profit.

On one topic only do I purpose to touch at present—the University question. That question the Airdfheis has unfortunately left practically in the precise position in which it found it. Before the Airdfheis assembled the League had no clear or well-defined policy on this question; the Airdfheis has certainly not supplied the want. The crude resolutions submitted by the Coisde Gnotha, the delegates absolutely bolted. This is an accurate summing up of what occurred.

The history of the Resolutions in question is not without interest. As soon as it became certain that an Irish Universities Bill was to be brought forward, and probably passed, the status of the national language in the prospective University institutions became for Irish Ireland a problem of the highest importance. Its importance might be grasped or it might not, but in itself it was undoubted. It was the plain duty of the Coisde Gnotha to take the new situation into consideration at once, and to give Irish Ireland an early, clear, and strenuous lead. How the failure is to be accounted for or explained away there is no telling, but the fact remains that until long past the eleventh hour the Coisde Gnotha utterly failed to put before Irish Ireland any policy whatever on the question. To excuse this apathy, or worse, the apology is now forthcoming from a quarter unreservedly friendly to the Coisde Gnotha that the body just named has much to do, and that it had months before deputed its Education Committee to provide it with a policy. The months rolled, and yet neither by the Coisde Gnotha nor by the Education Committee was any policy outlined; at all events, no policy was submitted to Irish Ireland from headquarters—no, not even the shadow of a policy, until the eleventh hour had long passed, nor was there forthcoming a particle of light or leading of any kind. Certain Gaelic Leaguers, some of them very prominent, had agreed to accept from the Government, appointments to various bodies connected with the University—the Senate included; had agreed to accept them, as we now know, without asking any questions whatsoever; in

some cases, at least, had doubtless accepted them with avidity. That was all the guidance the rank and file had received from those in sovereign command of the organisation. What curious government and leadership!

When it seemed already too late to make Irish Ireland properly acquainted with the issues involved, and to awaken it to their immense importance, some articles on the subject appeared in the weekly Press. In a few weeks, what the Coisde Gnotha could not do, or would not do, or, at all events, did not do, was done by private enterprise. Irish Ireland was thoroughly awakened. It knew at length where it stood, and realised fully that it was face to face with a problem as momentous as it was difficult. The Coisde Gnotha, not for the first time had been taught its business by unknown scribes.

There was apathy no longer. It gave place to alarm and activity. Somebody was deputed to frame a policy and embody it in Resolutions. A hasty and by no means exact study was made of the articles that had just appeared, and this study after a little eventuated in the drafting of the vague, fibreless, and rather detached Resolutions subsequently adopted by the Coisde Gnotha, and, later still, through fear of giving the smallest countenance to the wreckers, bolted by the Ardfheis, in all their original flabbiness and indefiniteness.

Of what has so far occurred, the net result is that on the University question the Gaelic League is still without a policy worthy of the name. When the Airdfheis assembles again in August it is earnestly to be hoped that it will proceed to supply the want. Probably it will be tolerably free to face the task; for one may trust that those in authority will not before then have again begun to fear for their ascendancy, nor have any occasion to start another bogie to scare the delegates. Meanwhile it may be well to endeavour to make clear to all concerned how exactly matters stand.

The official resolutions record that Irish should be an essential subject for Matriculation, and up to the point where specialisation begins, in the proposed new Universities; that in each college of the Universities there should be chairs of Old and Middle Irish, of Modern Irish, of Irish History and Archæology, and of Irish Literature; that, after a date to be fixed, any new professors appointed should be capable of imparting instruction through Irish; that there should be a special Degree for Celtic studies; that certain courses in the Gaelic Training Colleges should be recognised by the Universities. The first thing that will strike anybody about these resolutions is their crudeness and extreme vagueness; and at the Airdfheis all attempts to make them clearer and more definite were indiscriminately voted down—through dread of the wreckers.

When is Irish to be made an essential subject for Matriculation? Immediately that the Universities are launched? Such a thing is not to be thought of, for it would be plainly impossible. At some future date, more or less remote, but not to be defined? Almost the most reactionary member of the future Senates might well agree to that; for it would in reality commit him to nothing. Within a reasonable time, after the launching of the University, notice having been previously given? Certainly. But what is a reasonable time? Five years has been suggested. No such prolonged interval is needed. Suppose it is agreed, as soon as may be after the Bill has become law, that Irish must in due time be obligatory for matriculation, then an interval of three years reckoning from the date of the abolition of the Royal University will certainly be ample for all purposes. To fix a longer period will be needlessly and quite unjustifiably to defer the date on which Irish becomes an essential subject.

Who is to make Irish an essential subject? The Statutory Commission, or the Crown-nominated Senate, or some future elective Senate? The resolutions do not tell us to whom we are to look. If we are to look to a future elective Senate, then, from an Irish Ireland point of view, the acceptance by Gaelic Leaguers of appointments on the nominated Senates and Governing Bodies is not only futile, but far worse. They have accepted Government appointments—for no end or purpose whatever; solely in the gaiety of their hearts. The Bodies to which they belong are expected to do nothing for Irish Ireland; and in five years those bodies will cease to exist and their members return to private life.

Perhaps, however, the Statutory Commission or the Crown Senates are expected, although the resolutions do not say so, to do justice to Irish, and possibly they are to be asked to do so. If this be so, it would be well if it were plainly stated. But let that pass. If they are expected to concede the rightful claims of the national language, what has been done, or what is being done, to represent and enforce those claims? By the Airdfheis and Coisde Gnotha, nothing whatever, as far as the public is aware. It is not even clear that the bodies in question are to be troubled with those claims at all, or that they are to be asked even to consider them—so beautifully crude and indefinite have the said Resolutions been left. These are points which will need the attention of the next Airdfheis. There ought to be some understanding as to how and when and by whom the claims of the national language are to be formally submitted.

If the claims of the language are to be urged from the outset, it may be well for the Airdfheis to appoint a special Committee to take charge of the matter; the action of the Coisde Gnotha in the past scarcely justifies the hope that, as

at present constituted, the matter could be safely left in its hands. Furthermore, we know that some of its most important members do not believe that Irish should at all be obligatory.

Should the claims of the national language be put forward as soon as the new Universities are launched, it is the Statutory Commission apparently that will have to consider and deal with them. To that body the power is by law to be reserved either to concede them or to reject them. Evidently, therefore, steps should be taken to have those claims submitted to the Commission in due form. But they should be represented also to the Governing Bodies of the Colleges and to the Senates; for according to the Universities Bill (4—(2)) the Statutory Commission, in framing statutes, is bound to consider representations made to it by the Senate, or by the Governing Bodies of the Colleges, "or by any person appearing to the Commissioners to be interested in the making of those statutes or any of them."

The Statutory Commission, as foreshadowed, is in all truth hopeless enough. When one considers that the special interests of Irish Ireland are to be represented thereon by the member for Galway, who believes that Irish should remain a merely alternative subject, misgiving is almost transmuted into despair. The one hope, if any there be, of forcing the Statutory Commission to accord Irish its due would seem to lie in securing for its claims the overwhelming support of the Senate as well as of the Governing Bodies of the Colleges. If the claims of the national language be strenuously advanced by the Gaelic League, supported by a decisive majority of the Senate and the Governing Bodies, something like a satisfactory result may be hoped for. This, however, is assuming a great deal—probably much more than there is any warrant for assuming. So far, the Gaelic League has shown little strenuousness in dealing with this question; it is to be hoped that the future may bring about a better state of things. As for the Senate and Governing Bodies, those who hope that the claims of the national language will find any real sympathy or any considerable support at their hands are indeed sanguine. That these bodies will decide by a large majority to give no countenance to the claims referred to is much more likely. Or they may, perhaps, decide to shelve the question for a time, and engage in the well-known game of Send-the-fool-farther. Indeed, there seems no reason, as far as the Senate is concerned, why one of its Irish Ireland members should not propose, and another second, that Irish be in the new University, as it is in the Royal University, an alternative subject—a proposal which doubtless would secure the enthusiastic support of the majority of their colleagues. But

happen what may, if the claims of the national language are not fully recognised and conceded; if on the contrary they are scouted, as they may well be, the question immediately confronts Irish Ireland—what is to be done? What action should then be taken? Is the answer to this question to be left to the decision of the Gaelic League Senators? Can a man quite safely entrust a question affecting his honour to a deputy? No, the answer to such a question should be left to no individuals, however honest or trusted. That question the Gaelic League in Council should answer. Besides, we have had timely warning of the fibre of some of the Gaelic Leaguers on the Senate and on the Statutory Commission.

I assume that the Irish Ireland representatives, as such, have accepted the appointments offered them solely with a view to vindicating the claims of the national language. Suppose they fail in this, what will they do? If their appointments were for life, or for a long term of years, they might conceivably be justified in clinging to their positions in the hope that later on they might perhaps be more successful. Such is not the case. Not only are their appointments not permanent, but they are to terminate in the brief space of five years. All the appointments are then to lapse; and the Irish Irelanders, like their colleagues, will cease automatically to hold their positions. The future Senate will be constituted almost wholly by election. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that if the original attempt to secure for the national language its undoubted rights should fail, there is no possible chance of success during the reign of the nominated Senate, and the Irish Ireland Senators can hope to effect no good whatever by retaining their appointments. On the other hand, their presence on the Senate, however they may seek to justify it to themselves, can only mean acquiescence in the indignity offered to the language. Here, surely, there is room for no second opinion. This eventuality of failure, which no one can say is improbable, is one which surely the next Airdfheis should consider and provide for. It is to be hoped that it will do so. The situation is a grave one; and Irish Ireland will do well to disregard the sophistries and special pleading by which it is sought to delude it.

Certain it is that if the Statutory Commission, the Senate, and the Governing Bodies are encouraged to think that the rejection of the claims of the national language will not be resented, that the Irish Ireland representatives will hang on to their appointments at all costs, that they are not likely to create any unpleasantness for their West Briton colleagues no matter what may happen, the latter will be vastly encouraged to do what doubtless they will naturally be only too readily disposed to do—to relegate Irish to a very subordinate position in the University Programmes, as well as in the Programme for Matriculation.

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION AND THE OFFICIAL ORGAN.*

BY

HIBERNUS.

Vain, indeed, would it be to look for coherence or intellectual honesty in the editorial columns of the official organ, "as vain," to borrow the well-known lines of Dalton Williams, "as to look for accounts on Burgh Quay." No doubt, it is oftentimes much easier to evade a question than to face it, easier to close one's eyes to a difficulty in the hope that time may show some way of escape therefrom than boldly to grapple with it. If such methods deserve to be called a policy, the Gaelic League is, beyond all question, in possession of a policy on the University question. But have shuffling and procrastination and the Macawberesque attitude of waiting for something to turn up any title to be regarded as a policy? That is the real question; and the favourite devices of the official organ will not long succeed in obscuring it.

Already there is evidence, even in the carefully edited correspondence of the official organ itself, of anxiety and apprehension that everything is not as it ought to be. Even those who raised so successfully the cry of "Wolf, wolf!" are beginning to betray manifest signs of uneasiness. Many of those who were mesmerised by that cry are getting back to their normal condition; and a calm review of the attitude hitherto adopted by the League on the University question awakens reflections which are not at all pleasant. They find it impossible to enthuse, as does the official organ, about Birrell's bantlings, or to repose any trust in the Senate or Statutory Commission. Even the Chief Secretary's letter, with which the official organ affects to be so profoundly impressed, does not similarly impress everybody. It would require a great many "Obiter Dicta" to assure those who have perfectly open minds that all is well with such an awkward fact as the composition of the Senate and the Statutory Commission staring them in the face. Do what they will, they cannot free their minds from the growing apprehension that when the University is launched the claims of the national language will get very short shrift. Not being able to bury their heads in the sand, they are forced to contemplate a contingency which is probably not very remote, and to ask themselves what is to be done in case it should arise.

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* Sinn Féin, July 11, 1908.

Many people there are who, at any time, see only what they wish to see. But the Airdfheis did not consist merely of the editor of the official organ; others also were present. If the editor saw no signs of panic, there were those whose range of vision was not quite so circumscribed. Further, the proceedings of the Airdfheis make clear enough to those who are not wilfully blind that the cry of "the League in danger" succeeded in producing the effect which it was specially designed to produce. Since then, however, reflection has succeeded to panic, and with reflection has come the gradually deepening conviction that after all an Airdfheis, even when specially called together, has duties and responsibilities other than safeguarding the infallibility of the Coisde Gnotha.

Quite recently one does hear certain questions frequently asked and debated. Will the claims of the national language be conceded? Above all—for circumstanced as we are at present, that is the root question—will Irish be made obligatory for Matriculation and during the early stages of the Undergraduate course? And if these claims are repudiated, what should the Irish Ireland representatives on the Senate do, and what, as a matter of fact, are they likely to do? The more these questions are asked and the more thoroughly they are debated, the better. The great danger is that they may not be asked or debated sufficiently—which they certainly would not be if those who are now the guiding spirits of the Gaelic League could make their will prevail.

Much as one would fain hope for a different result, it would be folly to disguise from oneself that in all human likelihood the just rights of the national language will not be conceded. Looking to the constitution of the original Senate and of the Statutory Commission, it is as certain as anything still in the womb of the future can be, that the most important claim of all will be rejected, and that Irish will not in any sense be made obligatory. How there can be a second opinion on this point it is difficult to understand—especially as two of the most prominent Irish Irelander Senators, of whom one is to be the League's representative on the Statutory Commission, have made it quite plain that they are opposed to making Irish obligatory. This point the official organ carefully fights shy of, for reasons which are not far to seek.

Meanwhile the League has refrained from giving its representatives any instruction or advice. So far it has taken no definite action, but it will find it difficult to persist in this attitude of aloofness. Sooner or later it will have to decide whether, in case the claims of the national language be repudiated, it will be satisfied to have the Gaelic League Senators retain their positions, and retain them with its acquiescence or formal approval. The editor of the official

organ pretends not to understand all this. I have not so bad an opinion of him as to feel satisfied that he is so muddle-headed as he pretends. But if he does not understand, then I venture to say that he stands alone amongst the readers of the paragraphs which have made such a demand upon his intelligence.

His concluding paragraph should not be allowed to pass into early oblivion. "If the Irish Ireland representatives 'can do no good whatever by retaining their appointments' on the Senates and Governing Bodies, can 'Hibernus' inform us what good they could hope to effect for the language by giving up these appointments? We now leave him to answer this question." I suppose I ought to feel crushed. But again I have to remark that the writer cannot be so obtuse as he would make believe to be—especially as the answer must have been staring him in the face as he wrote. Is it of no advantage to the language to safeguard the honour and dignity of the Gaelic League, to refuse practically to acquiesce in treating both the League and the language with contumely? Is it of no advantage to the language to refrain from practically betraying the cause to which it is allied?

I have not said that the Irish Ireland Senators "can do no good whatever by retaining their appointments." My thesis from first to last was that they could do no good for the language, whilst of necessity they would do much harm. No doubt they can do some good in many ways, and perhaps for many people. But one whose sole outlook is the advancement of the national language, to whom it has ever brought the smallest advantage, for whom, come what may, it can never imply the least benefit, material or otherwise, cannot be expected to sympathise with the policy of "seats at any price," even though such a policy should not in all directions be wholly barren of good results.

IRISH, THE UNIVERSITY AND PATRIOTISM.*

BY

SCHMALSGRUEBER.

There are those amongst us who have been expecting for some time past that the lack of a definite and strenuous policy, vigorously pursued, in reference to the status of the national language in the projected University in Dublin, and for

* *The Peasant*, July 11, 1908. In reply to an Article entitled "Irish, The University, and Idealism," signed "M.J." The writer "as one deeply interested both in the University Question and in the Irish Language Movement" strongly opposed making Irish compulsory. A change made by the Editor of *The Peasant* in a pronoun revealed that "M.J." was a lady.

entrance thereto, could not fail to lead sooner or later to an abundance of such pronouncements as that signed "M. J." in your latest issue. It is always the penalty of half-heartedness that those who are on the fence descend to take part against you, when they once see that you do not thoroughly mean business. That we shall have in the near future many such pronouncements as your contributor's is pretty certain. So far, caution has kept such people in the background. They now see that they can ventilate their real opinions without running much risk. So we may look for a plethora of pronouncements all claiming to speak with the voice of commonsense, utility, bread-and-butter, and all the rest of the long litany which at every stage of the language movement we have heard recited unto weariness and vexation of spirit.

Would it not be well for all of us to call to mind every morning for some time to come, great a bore as it may be, that for better or worse we are living in Ireland; that most of us shall have to be content to remain in Ireland; that in Ireland all grades of education ought to be Irish; and that whilst the national language is in a subordinate position, and not an essential part of all our educational systems, education in this land, for all our make-believe, never will or can be Irish? We may find it troublesome to look this truth in the face, and act accordingly. But we cannot get rid of it by striving to ignore it. Nor is it manly or patriotic to seek to do so. We must be prepared to suffer the inconvenience entailed by our past follies. Making sorry faces, and bewailing the fatuity of those who have gone before us, will not help us to redeem the past. To restore the national language to its rightful place needs drastic measures. Let us nerve ourselves to adopt them, now that circumstances have become fairly promising; or otherwise let us understand once for all that we are content to see the national language kept permanently out of its own. We are not going to restore it unless we decide to make it a necessary part of education in all grades, and, as soon as may be, the common vehicle of education. And in education we all know that all real reform must proceed from above downwards. Hence we must begin with the University.

All this clap-trap about Latin and other things must cease. We cannot allow Latin or anything else to delay the only effective beginning that can be conceived of the reform of education in Ireland. That beginning is to make it Irish at once, as far as is practicable; and to go on making it increasingly Irish according as it becomes practicable to do so. Even a beginning of this root-reform cannot be attempted without making Irish obligatory. For, remember, we are not dealing with Greek, nor Latin, nor French, nor any other language,

dead or foreign, but with the national language. To find the claims of classics or of foreign languages seriously brought forward here for the purpose of creating difficulties is irritating to anyone who is willing to look at things in proper perspective and proportion. There need be no hesitation about admitting that difficulties will arise, are bound to arise, and very grave difficulties. As we have been so long proceeding on hopelessly wrong lines, this is unavoidable. We must face the difficulties, and abide by the inconveniences and drawbacks, such as they are, until time and Irish brains and patriotism succeed in righting matters. The one thing that we cannot afford to do, and must not dream of doing, is, because of difficulties, to continue in the wrong path. That would never lead us to our destination. This is the simple answer to all such arguments as your contributor piles up. A case vastly stronger than that which she presents could easily be made in favour of the views she advocates. With little difficulty I could make a much more stronger case myself, did not honesty and patriotism alike forbid it. But the strongest case that could possibly be made would not be convincing, much less conclusive, except to such as are prepared to stifle national sympathies, to repudiate at least in effect the claims of patriotism, to regard Irish throughout, whether consciously or otherwise, as on a plane with dead or foreign languages. There can be only one right course; and no difficulties that can be urged against adopting the only proper course can ever make it right, or in the best sense wise, to persist in the wrong course.

"The requirements of modern education," "overcrowded curricula," and the rest, are arguments whose exact weight many of us can well understand, having been all our lives engaged in educational work. Their weight in the present case is less than nothing; or, to put it more correctly, we cannot afford to allow those arguments to weigh with us. If we do, we know the penalty—the continued West-Britonising of Irish education, and the ultimate extinction of the national language.

If the Government, or a Government Department, made Irish compulsory, we should at once yield. We should discover forthwith that the difficulties we deemed so great were more apparent than real. When Hungary won her Constitution almost the first use she made of it was to change the school language from German, which had long been in posssesion, to Magyar. That this caused very great difficulties everyone will see at a glance; but difficulties or no difficulties, national self-respect and national well-being demanded it, so it was done.

"The requirements of modern education" and "overcrowded curricula" are not peculiar to Ireland. They are not, I expect, unknown in Poland. Yet in Russian Poland Russian, by a convention between the Holy See and Russia, is compulsory in all the Seminaries. This creates difficulties, no doubt, difficulties which arise not from the claims of patriotism, but from the will of a foreign government; nevertheless they are not found insuperable. When Ireland was almost wholly Irish-speaking English was made the language of the national schools. That, too, created difficulties, yet the voice of protest was scarcely heard in the land. Still earlier, when Maynooth was established, to make English, which few understood, obligatory, and to make Irish, which almost everybody knew, voluntary for the most part, must have entailed very great difficulties; but difficulties are invariably made light of, except where there is question of Irish. Later on, Irish was made obligatory in Maynooth, and difficulties arose, and Irish had to go by the board, but English is still obligatory, just at the very point where Irish has been made optional.

You see how different the standpoint is, according as there is question of the national language and of the requirements of nationality on the one hand, or of the claims of a foreign tongue and the requirements of a foreign government on the other. In the one case difficulties are held to be insuperable; in the other they melt into thin air. So also the difficulties of making proper provision in the Training Colleges for the teaching of Irish were of the most formidable character until the National Board issued its regulations making a second language obligatory after January, 1911; since then the alleged difficulties have vanished, or at all events have not been heard of. Might we not try, just for variety's sake, to do our duty by the national language without being dragooned into it by the Government or by a Government Bureau?

Your contributor's suggestion that Irish be made an alternative subject with English must be meant as a joke. If seriously meant, it will not do. It would not give Irish its proper status. Further, it would be an alternative only in name. It would suit the Seminaries that are unwilling to teach Irish to perfection. It would suit the whole West Briton horde still more. It simply will not do. Irish must be obligatory. Some time must be given to enable all parties to prepare for this. Let them have three years to prepare after the inauguration of the University; but, if from no higher or nobler motive, then, at least for very shame let us hear no more of such squalid arguments as have been advanced against according the national language its rights. Those arguments have been sadly overdone. The movement has had to meet and strangle them at every step it has taken.

IRISH IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: THE OFFICIAL ORGAN AGAIN.*

BY

HIBERNUS.

The official organ in a rage is neither interesting nor impressive, but it is at all events less ridiculous than when mounted on stilts. It has been incoherent; at present it is almost inarticulate. What it may soon become at a similar rate of progress, fancy can scarcely picture.

Is it worth while to further notice its vapourings? It is doubtful, to say the least. One may do anything with a man in a passion, except argue with him; to do so only aggravates his malady, to say nothing of the waste of time. Even the prophet, who so disturbs the equilibrium of the official organ —why, bless your good honest soul, he is as clay in the potter's hands in comparison.

Well! well! so the poor prophet is at a discount. All the same, there are times when the prophet's role is of the easiest. "Never prophesy," saith the proverb, "unless you know." But what if you do happen to know? There are times when the needful knowledge does not demand any considerable endowment of prophetic vision. You only need to know those about whom you venture, on a humble scale, to prophesy. You can easily predict what an Orangeman, or a Seoinin, or a West-Briton will do in certain cases. Further than this I have not ventured. In certain cases you will be safe in prophesying what the official organ will do; although one must allow that cases there well might be in which to prophesy regarding it would be futile. When a man has not the faintest notion of what he will or ought to do himself, prophecy is then obviously out of season.

We know the Senate. We know what it would do; and, in the absence of such pressure as has not yet been brought to bear upon it, we know, down to the finest point, what it will do. The pressure has not so far been brought to bear. Those who could bring it to bear, whose business it is to bring it to bear, refuse to move in the matter. So public opinion remains unorganised. We are to stake all upon negotiation, upon the might of amateur diplomacy. Before these two forces the opposition of the West Briton majority will totter like the walls of Jericho; and Birrell's bantlings, "our own countrymen," the well-beloved of the British Sovereign, will capitulate at discretion. That they will do so is placed beyond

* Sinn Féin, July 25, 1908.

all doubt by the fact that two of their colleagues, who are amongst the official or semi-official representatives of Irish Ireland, agree with them that Irish ought not to be an obligatory, but merely an alternative subject, in the new University. Does that not rule out all further controversy? What more is to be said? Can any one be such a sceptic as to refuse to share the childlike and absolute faith of the official organ? Away with all such sceptics! Whoso would distrust "his own countrymen" (the chosen of Birrell the Benevolent) deserveth not that earth should afford him shelter.

So the poor old official organ does not know the difference between a cause and a language. We have lately been told of a certain great man who did not know the difference between a concept and a hippopotamus. Compared with the official organ, that man, for all his eminence, was nowhere. "Language" is not a very recondite word. Neither is "cause." And does not inability to differentiate them rather tend to show that somebody's school days met with an untimely end? Perhaps, however, enough, or more than enough, has been said upon that point.

I regret that my efforts to enlighten the official organ have met with such indifferent success. It proves that the truth of Dr. Johnson's famous dictum is likely to be illustrated in every age. Much as I may grieve that the official organ is "still in the dark as to how the position of the language would be assured or improved in any way by the Irish Ireland representatives throwing up their positions on the Senate and Governing Bodies," I fear I can assist it but little. I have sought to make it clear; and whatever my success, it has certainly been made quite clear by others. Those who do not wish to see it, do not see it; that is all.

It has been pointed out again and again that, in the absence of any thorough-going and organised expression of public opinion on an impressive scale, the Irish language will not have its rights conceded in the new University, and, above all, will not be made obligatory for Matriculation nor during the early Undergraduate years. What will the situation then be? The Irish Irelanders, a household divided amongst themselves, will have failed to secure the language its proper status. They certainly can do no good by retaining their seats. The second year, nor the third, nor subsequently, the very same people, whether Senate or Statutory Commission, will not grant—even if we assume that they could—what they refuse in the first instance. To do so would stamp them as little better than imbeciles. Either they will concede the rights of the language at the outset, allowing a reasonable interval to elapse before Irish actually becomes obligatory; or they will not grant them at all. As things are at present

shaping themselves, the latter is all but certainly what will happen. The one remaining hope will then be that when the Statutory Commission and the nominated Senate shall have passed away the elected Senate will address itself to put matters right.

I am told that I have a very poor opinion of the Gaelic League if I think it would tamely submit to the treatment which I foretell will be meted out to it. I cannot describe more accurately nor crisply than by adopting these words what will happen, as a matter of simple fact, if the Gaelic League representatives cling to their seats after the rejection of the claims of the language. The League will tamely submit to the treatment meted out to it, no matter how it may be sought to gloss the humiliation. Whether the Irish Ireland representatives "sit dumb or not," is quite immaterial. They may talk never so loudly and protest even unto hoarseness; but retaining their seats after they have failed to achieve their object, and when they can no longer do any good for the language, nor hope to do any, will be, whether they sit dumb or not, to virtually accept the rejection of the claims of the language. The League may then become as active as it is now inactive; but how hollow and unreal will all its protestations and remonstrances be, whilst the very deities of Gaeldom continue to enfold themselves in their Senatorial robes and merely hug their servitude!

If, on the other hand, they resign they will have raised the question of Irish in the University in a form which will compel the attention of the country, and which will make it absolutely certain that, under the elected Senate at all events, it will be awarded its rights. This latter is by no means certain to happen if they cling to their seats; there will be, at least, the danger that the country may acquiesce, as well as the League and its representatives. Further, the chances of the Senators who should thus resign being elected to the future Senate would be as great—indeed there can be very little doubt, much greater—than if they should have clung to their seats, unable to effect anything. Thus would they find themselves again on the Senate, quite as soon as, after the initial failure, it would have become possible to do anything for the language. They would have saved the credit of the League, and the language would have suffered nothing, but gained enormously. It would then be certain to have full justice done it. But a policy of "seats at any price" seriously imperils its chances of justice even at the advent of the first elected Senate. That the chances of the Irish Ireland Senators coming back as the nominees of the British Sovereign would vanish with their resignation, I admit, at once; but I do not think the Gaelic League need groan over that prospect.

Perhaps, even now the official organ cannot see that the language stands to gain more if the Gaelic League stands fast and firm, is true to principle, and takes decisive action, if need be, than it can possibly gain by pusillanimity, by amateur diplomacy, by what in effect would be a betrayal of the cause.

THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE.*

BY

ROCK OF DOON.

A critical moment for Irish Nationality as well as for Irish education has all but arrived. The Universities Bill is almost through the Committee stage. The Chief Secretary means that it shall pass the Third Reading stage before the rising of Parliament. Whether it is intended that thereafter it shall immediately pass through its various stages in the House of Lords or not, does not appear. If not, it will be remitted to the Upper House the moment it assembles for the promised autumn session. It may, therefore, be taken for granted that the Bill, as modified by the Grand Committee, will, before the end of 1908, have been transmuted into an Act of Parliament; that during the coming year the various charters in their final form will be granted, and the organisation of the new Universities immediately taken in hand.

There are many persons and classes and interests for whom all this is a matter of concern; some of them, indeed, it concerns profoundly. But imperfectly as it appears to be realized, the situation on the eve of which we now are will affect Irish Ireland, not only profoundly, but vitally. For her it will mark the parting of the ways. The question that will fall to be decided is this: Is Ireland to avail herself of the first opportunity which has been offered to her for ages, to re-organise herself as a nation, or is she to continue, with increased momentum, to drift aimlessly and hopelessly along the easier path that leads to national extinction? Everything depends on whether she is prepared to reform her educational systems on national lines or not. Any fundamental reform attempted on these lines must begin with higher education: to attempt such a radical reform of Irish education as is needed by beginning below, would be just as hopeful as the famous undertaking to which the puissant Mrs. Partington addressed herself of yore. The time is now at

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*July, 1908.

hand when the work of reform can be undertaken in the proper way, at the proper point, and with the most promising hopes of success.

What are the prospects that such a reform as is needed will be resolutely taken in hand? In the near future we are to have three Universities. Two of them will cater in the main for a small minority of the population of this country; the third will cater for the higher educational requirements of the majority. One of the three is an old University, which has been, still is, and is likely to be in the future, the intellectual home and stronghold of West Britonism and all connotes. Except for the mere accident of geographical location, this University is as little in touch or sympathy with the Irish nation as if it had its centre and habitat in Terra del Fuego. Of the two proposed Universities, it would, I fear, be an idle dream to imagine that the University having its seat in Belfast will, unless perhaps after many years shall have elapsed, mean very much for the Irish nation. Any hopes for Irish nationality that can at present be reasonably cherished must of necessity centre in the new University having its seat in Dublin, with Constituent Colleges in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Of that University it may safely be foretold that its salvation will be to make itself from the outset as Irish as possible. As a University thoroughly Irish in spirit and atmosphere and culture, it cannot fail to prosper; but if it essays to be a weak imitation of its rival fronting on College Green, it will inevitably pine and wither; nor can anyone say that its fate will have been undeserved. As an Irish University, it must succeed and prosper; as an additional fortress of intellectual West Britonism it will sink into disrepute.

If these truths were only grasped by those who are to be charged with the organisation of the new University all would be well. If the country were only alive to them one might hope for the best. The country when roused can always find the means of making its will prevail. If even Irish Ireland were thoroughly awake and alert, if the Gaelic League had a clear-cut and strenuous policy there need be no occasion for despair.

Unfortunately it is not so. Anyone who reviews the situation carefully and calmly must be painfully aware that the case is quite otherwise. The constitution of the Statutory Commission and of the original Senate is now an oft-told tale. No radical reform of higher Irish education need be hoped for from either except under pressure such as they dare not resist. The country is not at all alive to the importance of the issues at stake. Even Irish Ireland has but a very vague and feeble conception of their importance. And the body whose office it is to educate the country as to the importance of those issues, to organise public opinion in favour of the claims of the national language, has done and seems to be doing

nothing in that direction. It contents itself with passing a few perfunctory resolutions, with securing the appointment of a few of its members to the Senate. The education of the country, and even of Irish Ireland, it leaves to such as may be willing to undertake that all-important work. Let Irish Ireland master the issues if it will, let Irish public opinion organise and express itself as it may, the body really responsible is too busy to attend to such trifles. There will be a rude awakening before long.

Public meetings have been held on occasions when they were not by any means so much needed. The hospitality of the Press has been sought, and the fullest advantage taken of it, when the questions to be discussed had not a tithe of the importance that attaches to the question now claiming attention. It is not yet quite too late. Already there are symptoms, few and faint though they be, that it is beginning to be felt that everything is not quite as it should be; that battles are not won by apathy and impassiveness; that the surest way to encourage one who would fain attack you is to give him clearly to understand, or allow him to infer, that he has absolutely nothing to fear at your hands, that he can work his will upon you with impunity; that, in fact, notwithstanding all he may do to your prejudice, you will still hob-nob with him, maintain the friendliest relations with him, not even dream of doing anything that could ruffle or inconvenience him in the least. The man who pants to attack you, and who would not in such circumstances do so, has not yet been born.

The annual meeting of the Airdfheis is imminent. Even though it should have to relegate every other question to a future meeting, ordinary or special, it will do well to tackle the University question from the Irish Ireland point of view; deal with it fully, clearly, and thoroughly; formulate a clear, definite and detailed policy in reference thereto; make all necessary arrangements to fully educate the country on the claims of the national language, and thoroughly organise public opinion in their support. This is the most important and urgent work to which the Airdfheis can put its hand. Other things, no matter how urgent or important, can better afford to wait. This will not brook delay.

I need not recapitulate the demands that have been made on behalf of the national language. There is the claim of the language at entrance to the University—that it be one of the obligatory subjects. There is the further claim that, during the Undergraduate course, Irish shall be obligatory in the early stages, as long as any specific subjects are made obligatory. Then there are claims as to the Degrees, Scholarships, Chairs, and the rest.

These claims are not all on the same footing. The claim that Irish be made obligatory is one about which there can be no parley or negotiation. There is no possible room for compromise or concession here. The national language cannot be treated as if it were Greek or Latin, or German or French. It is not a dead nor a foreign language; it is the national language. There can be no Irish education of which it does not form an essential feature. There can be no Irish education in the fullest sense of which it does not form the chief feature; of which it is not at once the basis and the ordinary vehicle.

The vehicle of Irish education the national language cannot just yet be made. If it could be, it should be. But an essential part of education it can and must be made. There will be opposition. Difficulties will be raised by the score. But Irish is the national language, and Irish education cannot be radically reformed, as it needs to be, except on the basis of making Irish an essential part thereof; so, no matter what the opposition or what the difficulties, Irish must be made obligatory in the University and on its threshold. We must begin this root-reform with the University. When it is effected there we can turn our attention elsewhere.

To sum up then on this head. The demand that Irish be made obligatory is vital. It must be pressed to the end. No compromise can be as much as thought of. Of the parties charged with the assertion of the demand, whosoever discusses compromise will be simply a traitor. Refusal can only be dealt with in the one way. It must be resented in every possible form. Those who refuse must be made to feel the wrath of Irish Ireland. For this we may have to wait; but the looked for opportunity will come. It always does come to those who know how to bide their time.

As to betrayal, we need not think of that just yet. One does not like to think it even possible; but there is unconscious betrayal, as well as conscious; and in public affairs one cannot afford to discriminate. A public man's motives may, when he takes a wrong course, justify him to his own conscience; they cannot justify him to those whom he represents, and whose interests he has prejudiced.

As to the other demands, negotiation is not impossible, provided it be clearly understood that ultimately the full rights of the national language be conceded. It may not be possible to have at first, or in all the Colleges, all the Chairs and all the encouragement for Irish studies that have been asked. The abatement of part of those claims for a time, but only for a time, need not necessarily be impossible. Here there will be ample scope for negotiation. It may be well to found the Chairs and Lecturerships gradually, and to provide the Scholarships and other rewards according as the need arises. The demands put forward contemplate a fully-

equipped Faculty and School of Irish Studies, and indicate rather what may be hoped for in time, and when the School has been fully developed, than what may be immediately feasible.

Some journalists and others across the Channel, with characteristic Saxon stupidity, have uttered a few ignorant jibes at the proposal to appoint several Irish instructors in the Cork College, inasmuch as the President's Report states that there were no pupils attending Irish lectures there during the year covered by the Report. Those intelligent scribes forgot to mention that the entire number of Arts students in the College has been and is infinitesimal; that under the new arrangements there is certain to be a great increase; and that, above all, it is contemplated that Irish be made obligatory for admission to the University and during the early Undergraduate years. So much for Saxon omniscience and effrontery.

During the course of the coming year, the organisation of the new Universities will doubtless be taken in hands. The moment the Universities Bill becomes law, the Senates and the Collegiate Governing Bodies, will have legal powers, and will proceed to exercise them, subject to the terms of the Act and Charters. The Statutory Commission also will proceed to exercise its powers. In two years at farthest from the passing of the Act the Royal University will be dissolved; but before that happens the new Universities will have been organised. We are mainly concerned with the Dublin Statutory Commission, with the Senate of the University having its seat in Dublin, and with the Governing Bodies of the Dublin, Cork, and Galway Colleges. An important part of the work of these bodies during the preparatory stage will be to arrange the conditions for admission to the University, as well as the Courses and Curricula of the University. On all these matters the Statutory Commission will have the last word. Interested parties, and especially the Senate and Governing Bodies, may make suggestions, and they must be heard, but only the Statutory Commission will at the outset be empowered by law to determine all these matters, to make Statutes and Regulations binding the Universities and everybody connected therewith.

Then it is that the claims of the Irish language will have to be considered. We may assume, although nothing of the kind appears to have been arranged, that these claims will come up before the Academic Councils and Governing Bodies of the Colleges. Later on, before the Senate, and finally before the Statutory Commission. If they have the support of the Senate, and of the other bodies referred to, it is hard to see how the Statutory Commission can spurn them, be the personal views of its members what they may.

But will they have the support of the Senate, Governing Bodies, and Academic Councils? Humanly speaking, it is all but certain that they will not, more especially the essential immutable demand that Irish be made obligatory. It is hard to see how the Senate can be in favour of those demands when we look to its *personnel*, and especially when we bear in mind that amongst the members of the Coisde Gnotha on the Senate, two at least there are who are well known to be opposed to the demand which is the really vital one. In view of this state of things, it is vain to hope for a favourable issue in the Senate Hall; and a rejection of the claims of the Irish language there, especially of the one essential claim, is sure to be followed by their rejection at the hands of the Statutory Commission.

I should not care to be in the position of the Gaelic League Senators. They will have, unfortunately without any guidance from the Gaelic League, to decide what they ought to do. The Irish language will have been hustled out. Until the original Senate passes into the gloom, and the Statutory Commission likewise, there will not be the faintest or remotest chance of reversing what shall have been done. Why then remain there? Why sit down in amity, just as if nothing had happened, with snobbery and West Britonism in high places? Why acquiesce in a decision of which you disapprove, which you have been unable to prevent, which in the time at your disposal you cannot undo? If remaining there under such circumstances be not a virtual betrayal of the cause of the language, such a betrayal is absolutely unimaginable. What else is it except to despairingly concur in a policy which does not point Irish Ireland-wards, which not only never can in the smallest degree point in that direction, but implies a continuance in full force, and with the concurrence of many professing Nationalists, and not a few Irish Irelanders, of the policy of educational West Britonism?

We have long been on the wrong road. We are still on the wrong road. Until we make Irish a necessary and vital part of Irish education, we cannot pretend to be even seeking the right road; much less can we regard ourselves as having safely got back to it. To get back will involve some sacrifice, and inconveniences not a few. It is the inevitable penalty of our national wrong-doing. But not all the inconveniences that the search for the right path must entail can justify or palliate our continuing in the wrong path. Even if these difficulties and inconveniences should dog our steps for many years we must abide them. Some time or other we shall have to face and conquer them, unless we are prepared to regard the ideal of Ireland a Nation as one that is doomed to perish. Unless Irish be an essential part of Irish education we shall be daily hastening the work, not of national regeneration, but

of national extinction. There are those who close their eyes to this. It is, nevertheless, the naked truth. Let not self-interest nor ambition blind us to it.

Those who as Senators are to represent the Gaelic League and to champion the interests of the ancestral tongue will be all the better able to decide aright by taking counsel with the Gaelic League in Annual Convention assembled. For their own security, as well as for Ireland's sake, they ought to seek that counsel and abide by it:

By the good you have wrought,
By all you have thought,
And suffered and done!
By your souls! I implore you,
Be leal to your mission—
Remembering that *one*
Of the two paths before you
Slopes down to perdition.
* * * * * * *
Know, then, your true lot,
Ye faithful, though few!
Understand your position,
Remember your mission,
And vacillate not,
Whatsoever ensue!
Alter not! falter not!
Palter not now with your own living souls.

THE UNIVERSITIES ACT AND IRISH IRELAND: SOME PRONOUNCEMENTS AND FOREBODINGS.*

BY

BALLERINI.

Not long since Cardinal Logue visited Kilkenny to preside over a religious function. During his sojourn in the City of the Confederation, his Eminence made several speeches. With one of them alone have we any present concern. The speech to which I refer has, I find, alarmed many good and estimable people. Hence, although it has been a good deal commented on and criticised already, it would seem not out of place to refer to it again briefly.

From any point of view, it was not a wise speech, although his Eminence is doubtless a very wise and prudent man. It

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* Sinn Féin, August 8, 1908.

would really look as if it had been made by request—I mean, of course, the portion of it which has excited so much comment.

One would like to know the Cardinal's authority for suggesting that, shortly before he spoke, an attempt had been made by an anti-clerical party to capture the Gaelic League. If it be true that such an attempt was made, it is really wonderful that few persons, if any, seem to know anything about it. Some of us are in a fair way of knowing what goes on from week to week in Irish Ireland circles. Had such an attempt been made, no matter how covertly, we could not well have failed to learn something of it; but we are quite unaware of any such attempt.

It is a matter of common knowledge that a small party of professedly ultra-clericals was charged with intriguing and conspiring to capture the Governing Body of the Gaelic League. For this probably there was very little or no foundation. The charge was made by the other side, and such charges are usually much exaggerated. But of an anti-clerical attempt to capture the League, I, at least, know and have heard nothing; neither, indeed, has anyone with whom I have discussed the point since the Cardinal made his speech.

Could it be, I wonder, that in the Dublin papers to which his Eminence referred, he read something about this alleged attempt of a few persons who pose as ultra-clericals to capture the League, and that there is simply a confusion of ideas. We can hardly think so, and yet there seems no other explanation.

At all events, such a speech, made by the Cardinal Primate, is a very serious thing for the Gaelic League and for Ireland; and one is compelled to say that it should never have been made on doubtful authority or information.

Very regrettable also was his Eminence's excursion into history. There is no incident in latter-day Irish history which the Irish Church ought to be so anxious to bury in eternal oblivion as that to which the Cardinal referred. That Irish ecclesiastics, at any period, could devise no better method of fighting Souperism than the active discouragement of the Irish language is far from creditable to their patriotism and intelligence. It is a page of our history of which we ought to be heartily and unreservedly ashamed. It is certainly imprudent to fasten attention upon it, even for the purpose of pointing a moral.

Quite recently we have also had another Episcopal pronouncement. In opening the Connacht Feis at Westport, the Archbishop of Tuam uttered a rather mysterious warning. I have tried hard to read between the lines of his Grace's pronouncement, but I am not at all sure that I understand him aright. It is clear that he was not talking at large, that

he had some very definite object in view. As far as I can gather his real meaning from his words, it appears to me that what was present to his mind was the attitude of Irish Ireland towards the Universities Act. If I am right, then beyond all doubt his Grace's words are ominous. They bode no good for the future of the national language in University education: quite the contrary. Spoken just when the Universities Bill was about to become law, and when its passing had become certain, his words need to be noted; indeed, they cannot be ignored. They seem to portend that his Grace will not be found upon Ireland's side when the battle of the language comes to be fought to a finish.

It would certainly be regrettable, and much worse, to find the successor of Archbishop MacHale, not on Ireland's side, but in the opposing camp. Should it unfortunately so happen, we cannot but regret it, but we cannot help it. At the same time, we must not allow ourselves to be thereby influenced or discouraged in the least. We know that wisdom and experience are invariably appealed to by all parties on all sides. Wisdom, however, is not always with the "wise." It has never been with the "wise" in this language movement of ours; for, at every step, the "wise" have been opposed to it. They are opposed to it to-day as they have ever been, only not quite to the same extent as they were five or ten years ago. It is an everyday experience for Gaelic Leaguers to see reaction and obscurantism and conservatism (I speak not politically) of the narrowest kind masquerading as prudence and wisdom and foresight. Clearly they are to be again in evidence in the near future. "Trust them not; they will prove a snare to your feet." In movements of a far-reaching national character, to be wise is to be courageous, to be intrepid, to tolerate no paltering with principle; to be weak, to be irresolute, to even contemplate the possibility of yielding up or paltering with a principle is the only folly. Gratuitously offend no one, no one, at least, who is not a declared enemy; be respectful to those whose office or years or endowments invite respect. But fight, fight, fight! Think not of defeat nor of truce! Be armed with one resolve—to fight to a finish; to fight with every legitimate weapon and on every possible occasion that offers until the battle is finally won. You cannot afford to consider whether others are as zealous for the cause as you are, or whether they have as much national spirit, or imagine they have; you must consider only that they are not on the right side; that you have to reckon upon their hostility or upon their defection.

No matter who may be against us, or frown upon us, or stand aside during this struggle, it must go on. If the Church, through its highest representatives amongst us, be found on the wrong side, or some of them, it will be a

calamity or a heartbreak. The Ecclesiastical Senators have, of course, a right to decide on which side they will range themselves; but they have no right, human or divine, to blame those who range themselves on Ireland's side for employing every lawful weapon to secure the victory for Ireland.

The question is a simple one. Is the University to be Irish or West Briton? Here there is no room for hurlers on the ditch. No matter how wise he may deem himself, no matter how unexceptionable his motives, every man who is not Ireland's man, is, in this struggle, Ireland's foe. Until the struggle is ended he must be so treated.

It is a gross abuse of language to describe as Irish or national a University in which Irish is not an essential part of the instruction given; to style national or Irish any system of education, high or low, of which the language, literature, and history of Ireland do not form an obligatory feature. That such things are possible is but one of many symptoms of the abnormality of contemporary Irish thought and utterance.

It is useless to appeal to so-called wisdom and foresight in this matter. There is question, generally speaking, neither of wisdom nor of understanding—only of dense, utter ignorance; and, worst of all, unwitting, self-sufficient ignorance. If ignorance be, as we have been taught so long ago in the schools, the lack of knowledge which one ought to possess, how many are wise on this question, how many are qualified to discuss it and pronounce judgment upon it? For how many of our learned men know aught worth considering of the language, literature, or history of their country? How many of the Senators possess such knowledge? After all, wisdom and learning and experience are relative things—admirable within their own limits, but merely a snare when the border-land is passed.

It is time for the Gaelic League, for Irish Ireland, to bestir themselves. Too long have they been unaccountably inactive; but now at least, with the advent of the Universities Act to the Statute Book, the time has certainly come when further inactivity will be a crime. No man, no body of men, no matter what their position or how exalted, have a right on the mere strength of good intentions, to impede or delay the regeneration of the Irish nation. They must not be listened to here. With their help, or without it, the work must go on, and with accelerated momentum. No matter how upright my motives, I should not care to have to answer at the Bar of history for having taken sides against Ireland at this juncture. Infamy will be the portion, and how justly, of those who do so.

THE IRISH BISHOPS AND AN IRISH UNIVERSITY,

BY

An Irish Priest.

NOTE.

The following pages are published in the interests of Faith and Fatherland.

Hitherto the Irish Bishops have as public men enjoyed practical immunity from frank and open criticism.

Lest the groundlings within the fold should take scandal, or the enemy without rejoice, the political blunders of their Lordships have been as far as possible hushed up by contemporaries, while historians have sought to explain them away.

This policy, in itself unwise, has been the bane of the Irish Episcopate. Bad for their Lordships and hurtful to Irish national interests, it has in nowise benefited the Irish Church.

Of a policy intrinsically so unsound, and in practice found to have been so pernicious, there must be an end.

The stars are falling from the heavens. The statement recently published by the Irish Bishops, through their Standing Committee, is in sober truth a dagger aimed at the heart of the Irish nation. Needless to say that their Lordships did not so intend it; but such in melancholy reality it nevertheless is. Acting, doubtless, from the most unexceptionable and disinterested motives, the Bishops, not for the first time, have given a striking proof of political incapacity. Utterly and signally have they failed to grasp the issues at present before the country. Unwittingly they have sent forth a challenge to Irish national opinion and sentiment. In the end, if at all, the Irish language and the cause of Irish nationality will not thereby suffer. But it is sad, very sad, to reflect that their Lordships themselves have dealt their influence in Irish public affairs a blow from which it never can wholly recover. In the coming time, when they look back over the ruin they have wrought, never, never will it lie with them to say, "An enemy hath done this."

What the inherent power of the Bishops is, and what the scope of their official authority, every instructed Catholic knows. They are the official teachers of faith and morals. On all questions of faith and morality, and on all matters involving doctrinal or moral issues, their pronouncements are authoritative, and are entitled to obedience. Not that their decisions on such questions are infallible or final. They are

subject to review, and may be reversed, by the Holy See; but whilst they stand, Catholics are bound to obey them. Thus, for example, the Bishops have an inherent right to pronounce upon systems of education, to say whether or not such systems are dangerous, intrinsically or accidentally, to faith or morals. Their decisions in such and similar cases, unless appealed against and set aside by a higher tribunal, command Catholic obedience. To prevent misconception, so much it may, perhaps, be necessary to premise.

Outside the sphere of faith and morals, the Bishops as such have no official authority whatsoever; no right to command the obedience or to bind the consciences of Catholics. No doubt, the people are always glad to hear their views; and their Lordships have a right to express them. But their views in such cases derive their weight and authority merely from the wisdom, experience, and public position of their Lordships, not from the Episcopal office. The people may accept or reject them, as it seems good to them.

In Ireland historical causes have given the Bishops more political power, more influence in civil and social affairs, than their Episcopal brethren possess in any part of Catholic Christendom. In view of their recent pronouncement, it has become necessary to ask seriously, though regretfully, whether it is well that they should continue to wield such exceptional adventitious power; whether they have in point of fact shown themselves fit to wield that power for the true and abiding interests of the nation. Personally, I am distinctly of opinion that the influence of the clergy generally in Irish public affairs has in the main been salutary. In the light of history it is difficult for any impartial man to make a like statement in respect of the exercise by the Bishops of the political power they possess. In dealing with national issues particularly, their intervention has usually been unfortunate, and not rarely disastrous. I fail to see how anyone, calmly reviewing the past, can come to any other conclusion than that, where simple national issues are at stake, they are not necessarily wise or safe guides for the people. When they formally express an opinion, it should, of course, be received with all respect; but ultimately the people, weighing all the facts and circumstances, are entitled to follow their own judgment. Nay, more, they ought to do so. History certainly teaches the lesson, that on national issues the judgment of the people is, on the whole, much more likely to be sound than that of their Lordships.

In considering the public action of the Irish bishops in the past, I put on one side their handling of all questions which could in any wise be held to have involved issues of faith or morals. I confine myself to their purely political action. The record will be found instructive, if not exactly pleasant, reading.

Dr. Troy was formerly Archbishop of Dublin. Before his translation to the Metropolitan See he was Bishop of Ossory. In Dr. Carrigan's "History of Ossory" (Vol. I., p. 108), we find a Pastoral of his Lordship. From this Pastoral we learn that his Lordship, at a time when the American Colonies were fighting for their independence, directed his flock to observe a day's fast, and to humble themselves in prayer, that they might avert the Divine wrath provoked by their American fellow-subjects, who, "seduced by the specious notions of liberty and other illusive expectations of sovereignty, disclaim any dependence on Great Britain, and endeavour by force of arms to distress their mother country, which has cherished and protected them." There is much more in the document to a like effect.

I pass over Dr. Troy's attitude and that of other Irish Bishops towards the Union, as the subject is a debated one; though personally I entertain a very distinct and decided view about it.

It is well known to all students of modern Irish history that the Bishops were in favour of the Veto; and that church and country were then saved from disaster only by the determined opposition of the Irish laity.

The Bishops, as we have been opportunely reminded, strangled the Tenant Right Movement of the Fifties by their support of Sadlier and Keogh and their satellites; men who had basely sold the country; one of them a man who had flagitiously violated his solemn oath, publicly pledged to his constituents.

With the exception of Dr. MacHale—the greatest churchman Ireland has known for long ages—Dr. Doyle, and Dr. Nulty, the Irish Bishops, until Dr. Croke—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—practically forced them to take the popular side, were, in the main, Whig politicians. Almost everywhere they gave their support, on the occasion of Parliamentary and other elections, to Whig candidates—most of them Castle-hacks and Place-hunters. Rarely, indeed, were they to be found exerting their influence on the popular side.

That these and similar chapters of modern Irish history could have been allowed to pass into practical oblivion we had all of us fondly trusted. That the Irish Bishops of the present time were as much ashamed of them as the rest of us we had come to believe. We had hoped that, if their Lordships intervened at all in the present controversy, their intervention would have gone a long way to atone for the political blunders and unwisdom of the past. Our hopes have been rudely dashed. Some fatality seems to brood over the Bishops the moment they enter the political arena, making it impossible for them to exercise their public influence wisely.

In the present controversy three courses were open to their Lordships. They could have given the weight of their support to the popular side: this would have been at once the courageous and wise course. They could have held aloof, and allowed the Irish and West British forces to fight their battle to a finish: this might not have been a very courageous line to take, but it would not have been altogether unwise. Lastly, it was open to them actively to oppose the popular wishes—a course which, however courageous, can only be described as unwise in the last degree. This last is, nevertheless, the course they have elected to take. Its adoption is deplorable; but it must be added that it is strictly in accordance with historical precedent.

Can any excuse be made for their Lordships? I have heard it pleaded in their behalf that they could not approve of a regulation that might have kept Catholics out of the National University. The excuse is puerile. It is difficult to see how the Senate can make any regulations whatsoever in reference to Fees or Programmes that will not shut out many students. Any qualifying test whatever is bound to have that effect. And if the County and Borough Councils are forced into hopeless antagonism to the University how many will be shut out?

A document more unconvincing, and, indeed, more irrelevant than the statement of the Standing Committee—the portion of it, that is to say, dealing with the national language—it would be difficult to find. We read:—"The progress of Irish in our Seminaries and in numbers of the Intermediate schools of the country, so far from being an argument for compulsion, shows what the voluntary system, under our constant encouragement, has hitherto done, and what, no doubt, it will do still more successfully in the Colleges of the new University." It only needs to be pointed out that the progress of Irish in the Seminaries and Intermediate Schools has never been advanced as an argument for compulsion. It has been brought forward merely to meet an objection urged against compulsion by Dr. MacWalter and others; to show the absurdity of the statement made by Dr. MacWalter, that in the Royal University "95 per cent. of the students have shown in the clearest manner that they did not want Irish." The object in view has been to show that this and all kindred statements are absolutely devoid of foundation; that as the vast majority of the students were precluded by the University Regulations from presenting Irish, the fact that they did not present it does not at all prove that they did not want it; that, in fact, the Intermediate figures and all other available data tend rather to show that exactly the opposite is the truth. The Intermediate statistics then suggest the willingness of the overwhelming majority of the

pupils to take Irish at Matriculation if they could; and it is to support this view, not as an argument for compulsion, that they have been brought forward.

Again we read:—"It is quite possible that in existing circumstances compulsion, instead of being a help, would be a hindrance, to the language movement." With all due respect, all experience obliges us to discredit their Lordships' statement. But, in any case, that is not the issue. Whether compulsion would be a hindrance to the language movement or not is not what the country has to decide. To strive to make the controversy turn upon it, is to attempt, doubtless unconsciously, to evade the real issue. The issue, be it again repeated, is not the value or the reverse of compulsion, but whether in the National University the national language is to be degraded or to be accorded its rightful place; whether studies without which an Irish liberal education is impossible are to be essential, or are to be merely optional, and so be relegated to an inferior position; in a word, the issue is the character of the University—IS IT TO BE IRISH, OR IS IT TO BE WEST BRITON? That issue their Lordships have not discussed; never even for a moment have they condescended to approach it.

Even if we believed, as we most certainly do not, that the voluntary system would prove quite as effective as compulsion, we should still strenuously oppose the degradation of the national language, its relegation to an inferior position, and the continuance of a West British educational policy. The country has made it abundantly clear that it will not allow the national language to be degraded, even at the bidding of their Lordships; that it wants to see Irish accorded its rightful place, and the University made Irish, as far as it is at present possible to make it so. The contention of the Standing Committee does not, therefore, in any way affect the vital issue.

If their Lordships of the Standing Committee have such implicit faith in the voluntary system, why do they not advocate that it be adopted all round? They know better than to make such a recommendation. It would be decidedly interesting to experiment on the efficacy of "bright centres" of Latin or Mathematical studies, that would "by their light and rewards attract young Irishmen within the sphere of their influence." Would any body of responsible men—not to speak of men occupying the exalted position of the members of the Standing Committee—venture to suggest to the English, the Germans, the Hungarians, or the Japanese, that they should hazard the future of their respective national languages upon the voluntary system, or "on the light and rewards" of "bright centres" of study? How easy it is to platitudinise in Ireland?

"The framing of the curriculum," say their Lordships, "is the business of the Senate." Undoubtedly it is. But in framing the curriculum have the Senators any right to flout national opinion, to outrage national sentiment, to degrade the national language? As to the details of the Programmes, there is absolutely no disposition to interfere with the Senators. But the question of the status of the national language is one that no Senate has the smallest right to determine in a manner insulting to the feelings of the Irish people, and hurtful to the honour of the nation. Let the Senate accord Irish studies their proper place—in other words, make them essential—and their Lordships will have no further cause to complain of interference on our part. But the status of the national language is a matter in respect of which the national wishes must prevail, let the Bishops and the Senate think and say what they will.

The Senate is not Ireland's choice. It is the choice of the British Government, or its agents. The satellites of the Government knew whom they were choosing. They were careful, in the main, to select only those who could be relied upon not to set up an Irish University, if they could possibly avoid doing so. The foresight of the Government agents has been justified. The Senators are making the best fight they can to do what their patrons expected and appointed them to do. But even with the unexpected and unnatural aid of the Standing Committee, they will not prevail.

The Standing Committee complains of the treatment which the Senate "is receiving in the columns of the public Press." This is the most amazing portion of their Lordships' statement. What about the treatment that the advocates of an Irish University are receiving? Have the Senators been called "anti-clericals," "whipped curs," and the like? The Senators have undoubtedly been called West Britons. And what else are they? Is not anyone who advocates a West Briton policy, or acquiesces therein, a West Briton? Is it not a West Briton policy to seek to degrade the national language, to seek to set up a West Briton University, to seek to perpetuate foreign ideals and the domination of a foreign language in Irish education? Some indeed may not be conscious of their West Britonism. They would plead Catholic interests, or their consciences, or their trusteeship, to justify their opposition to an Irish University. All such pleas are futile: are mere illusions. Facts are facts, and a West Briton is a West Briton—good faith and specious excuses notwithstanding.

Their Lordships allude to the progress that Irish has made in the Seminaries, under their "constant encouragement." It is

always ungracious to dispel illusions. But this "constant encouragement" must be tested by the touchstone of history. From the year 1795 until about the year 1875 the "constant encouragement" of the Bishops brought the national language to death's door. What the voluntary system and their "constant encouragement" did for Irish in Maynooth during that long span of years is well known. Did their Lordships inspire or create the Gaelic revival? No! They left the work to others. They joined the movement late and reluctantly, just as they have joined all national movements, whenever they have joined them at all. For years they left the Irish chair in Maynooth vacant. They restored it only when the Revival movement, which in its infancy owed them nothing, practically forced them to do so. Irish in recent years was for a considerable time compulsory in Maynooth; some time ago their Lordships made it practically optional, another signal instance of their "constant encouragement," Year by year students are in large numbers dispensed from the Irish examinations at entrance to Maynooth, and from its study within the College. So it has been stated in the Press; and it has not been contradicted, for the best of all reasons. Irish is still not taught in some Seminaries, nor have any steps whatever been taken to have it taught.—although it is supposed to be required for entrance to Maynooth. Does not all this clearly prove the "constant encouragement" extended by their Lordships to the national language, and the utter needlessness of compulsion?

Finally their Lordships tell us that "Irish certainly would drive away from the University not a few students who, if once brought under the influence of the Gaelic School of a Constituent College, would grow up good Irishmen." Who are these students? In face of the statistics published by Dr. Wall, of St. Munchin's College, Limerick, it is difficult to imagine where they are to come from. It has been shown to demonstration that last year over 90 per cent. of the pupils of the Catholic Secondary Schools for boys were being taught Irish. Let the Seminaries in which Irish is not yet being taught only do their duty, let the secondary schools in which but few pupils are being taught Irish fall into line, and there will be no students whom compulsory Irish can possibly keep out of the University.

But suppose Irish be not made compulsory, and that the mythical students whom compulsory Irish would keep out of the National University be admitted, what hope is there that a student whom Irish would keep out will trouble "the Gaelic school of a constituent college" or "grow up a good Irishman?" Not the faintest. Should compulsory Irish suffice to keep him out, he will, in case he be admitted, give the Gaelic school a wide berth. From the national point of view he will be an evil influence in the University.

There is a still more fundamental consideration. Is it worth while for sake of a few students of Catholic West Britain to

antagonise and exasperate Catholic and Nationalist Ireland? That is exactly what the course recommended by their Lordships cannot fail to effect. The martyr-spirit has not been conspicuous in Catholic West Britain; it has been in Catholic and Nationalist Ireland. Catholic and Nationalist Ireland has in obedience to their Lordships kept out of Trinity College and the Queen's Colleges; has Catholic West Britain done so? Is it wise to exasperate the faithful many for sake of the unfaithful few?

The *Times* has loudly applauded the pronouncement of the Standing Committee. Can this be exactly agreeable to their Lordships? Ought it not rather lead them, as it used to lead O'Connell, to examine their consciences, to discover of what crime they have been guilty against Ireland?

In face of a great national issue, at a moment big with fate for the future of the Irish nation, where is the wisdom of suggesting a sort of Debating-society discussion as to the relative merits of compulsion and of the voluntary system? Respectful as one would be, it is nevertheless impossible not to ask, wherefore such solemn trifling?

For the Cardinal one cannot but be sorry; but unfortunately it has been public property for some time past that his Eminence was opposed to the national demand. The Archbishops of Dublin and Cashel, and the Bishops of Raphoe, Kildare, Clonfert, Waterford, and Cloyne, were also present at the meeting of the Standing Committee. Some members were absent, amongst them the Archbishop of Tuam, who is known to be particularly hostile to compulsory Irish. That was, of course, to have been expected. For the Archbishop of Dublin there will be general sorrow and sympathy. What a miserable anti-climax to a long series of distinguished services to the cause of the national language? Possibly his Grace's association with the lamentable Statement of the Standing Committee may be his misfortune rather than his fault. He may have been overborne at the meeting. Certain it is that Nationalist Ireland will prefer, while it may, to think that such has been the case.

For his Lordship of Raphoe unfortunately no excuse is possible. The hand that penned the resolution passed at a very small meeting of the Donegal County Council is visible in almost every line of the Statement of the Standing Committee. Unfortunately, therefore, the King's O'Neill is not the only degenerate bearer of a great name.

May no such trial await the Irish nation in the future as that which she is now called upon to endure! May those who love Ireland with a love exceeding great, to whom the present and future interests of the Irish Church are as dear as the weal of their own souls, who would willingly pour out their blood for either, never again to be fated to have their chief pastors opposed to them on a great national issue! Another such blunder will end for all time the political power of the Bishops. Another such

display of political unwisdom and incompetence, another such manifestation of national shortsightedness, of lack of sympathy with national ideals and aspirations, of seemingly radical incapacity to appreciate a great and far-reaching national issue, and down goes, deservedly and for ever, the influence of the Irish Episcopate in Irish public affairs. Their Lordships, with their own hands, will have dug the grave of their political power; and, at its passing, no honest Irishman will render it the tribute of a tear.

What further folly is for the moment possible, it were hard to tell, unless their Lordships, warned by Father Humphreys, should proceed to denounce the Irish Revival as anti-clerical, or to condemn the Gaelic League as a secret society. Should West Britain prevail, should the hopes of an Irish University be dashed, then, to complete the mortification of Nationalist Ireland, it only remains to proceed to the contemplated election of Sir Christopher Nixon as Vice-Chancellor of the National University.

West Britain will not prevail, must not prevail. "Ireland's good old cause" has survived even worse blows than that which the Bishops have dealt it, grievous and unexpected and unnatural though it be. The Irish Catholic laity saved Ireland from the Veto, and the Irish Church from British vassalage. Let the laity now by their determination, and with the assistance of their elected representatives on the local Councils, save Ireland and the National University from West Briton domination, and Irish honour from an indelible stain. When the final and decisive battle shall have been fought, where will victory rest—with Ireland, or with West Britain? With you, men of Ireland, rests the answer. Answer then without fear or faltering!

Courage, old land! Though the storm rages, and the thunders crash, and enemies compass thee round and straiten thee on every side, and children whom thou hast nursed at thy breasts disown and abandon thee,

> "Though art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
> Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks
> And death's pale flag is not advanced there."

AN IRISH UNIVERSITY: THE IRISH BISHOPS AND WEST BRITAIN.*

By Busembaum.

The hostility of the Irish Bishops to an Irish University, and the long and monotonous list of political blunders which the past century or thereabouts has placed to the credit of their Lordships, many profess themselves quite unable to

* Sinn Féin, March 6, 1909.

understand. That anybody should for a moment be at a loss for an explanation seems rather the really amazing factor in the situation. The explanation, as I hope to make quite clear, is by no means far to seek: indeed, it lies pretty much upon the surface.

That the bishops as politicians have blundered and blundered and blundered yet again, everybody now understands. It has been made as clear as the sun at noonday. Wherefore then they have blundered? There surely must be some explanation of so strange a phenomenon. Their Lordships ought plainly to be the most intelligent, the most learned, the wisest, the most experienced, if not of the population, at all events of their own profession. Why have they as politicians shown themselves so abjectly and hopelessly incompetent?

Powerless to divine the real explanation—obvious though it really is—many there are who have sought for an explanation everywhere but in the proper quarter. Some there are who have sought the explanation in a hare-brained theory of English intrigue at the Vatican. There is no doubt that whenever British interests seem to demand it, Irish affairs occasion English intrigue there as elsewhere. England has at all times resident in Rome any number of informal representatives to the Vatican, both clerical and lay. These representatives she doubtless employs whenever it suits her purpose. Ireland, on the other hand, is not represented at all, either formally or informally. There is in the Eternal City no Irish laity of any standing, no laity, that is to say, of Irish sympathies. And the few Irish ecclesiastics that live there lack the rank and status and prestige that would secure them any real influence. Diplomatically, therefore, England has it all her own way in Rome, so far as matters Irish are concerned. But it is not only untrue but ridiculous to say that English intrigue against Ireland is always in full blast in Rome. Neither in Rome nor in London are the English fools exactly; and it would be poor diplomacy to make themselves a bore and a nuisance by perpetual intrigue. At times, no doubt, English intrigue is active enough; but on the other hand, there are many things which certain foolish persons amongst us associate with English intrigue at the Vatican, of which absolutely nothing is known in the Eternal City, about which neither diplomatists nor Vatican officials give themselves the smallest concern. There are people who appear to have got English intrigue at the Vatican on the brain. They publish in sober earnest statements thereanent which are grotesque and ludicrous, which every Irish ecclesiastic knows to be absolutely devoid of foundation. Such statements are not only ridiculous, but positively mischevious. Instead of serving they prejudice Irish interests, national as

well as ecclesiastical. Still further, they occasionally give Irish ecclesiastics in high places a much needed opportunity of escaping readily from a difficulty, of riding off in triumph on a mere side-issue.

English intrigue is not set in motion at Rome except for some important and perfectly tangible purpose. When there is the question of the appointment of an Irish bishop, it need not be doubted that it is oftentimes real and active enough. We know how active it was—happily without success—when the great MacHale was translated from Killala to Tuam. We know too that it was very active whilst Dr. Walsh's appointment to the Metropolitan See was still pending. That it was also active when last the Sees of Tuam, Clonfert, and Kilmore were filled is not at all improbable; for in all three instances the wishes of the clergy were totally ignored—in the case of Tuam, indeed, their all but unanimous wish.

The fact that English intrigue at the Vatican undoubtedly explains some things, and may possibly explain others, is no reason why it should be set down as the one and only explanation of everything that occurs amongst us. That it had anything whatever to do with the Statement of the Episcopal Standing Committee was, from the outset, as well as from every point of view, wildly improbable. Why fall back upon so very improbable an explanation of the Episcopal opposition to an Irish University when a much more probable explanation stares us full in the face?

Consider the life of an Irish Bishop. The average Irish Bishop does not associate much with his clergy nor with the bulk of his flock. Rarely do they see him, in so far as they see him at all, except officially. He never has an opportunity of hearing their views upon any public question. Even the senior clergy do not think of freely expressing their opinions on general topics in the Episcopal presence. They certainly are not encouraged to do so; and if they ventured to do so, the chances are that in most cases they would be very unlikely to repeat the experiment. Some Irish bishops do not mix in society at all. Those who do, look elsewhere than to their clergy or the bulk of their flocks. Those whose society they cultivate are such gentry as are found in the neighbourhood, or such representatives of the professional or official classes as our cities or towns supply. What need to tell what these people are, whether Protestant or Catholic? Indeed, the Catholics amongst them are often much less Irish, in every possible respect, than Protestants of the same social standing. The Irish bishop's social world, when he does mix in society, is, therefore, a province, large or small, of West Britain. He often learns, as an Irish bishop once aptly phrased it "to hang up his hat in the halls of the great." When he has business in the Metropolis he is not unfre-

quently made welcome in Merrion Square or Fitzwilliam Place. Should he happen to be a member of some Board or Boards, he is thrown into frequent—sometimes almost constant—contact with highly-placed Government officials. When a few years have thus elapsed, the only views he practically ever hears freely expressed upon secular topics—political, social, educational—are those that are shaped and uttered in a West Britain environment. He often forgets that there is or can be any other view, or that any other view is of the smallest account. His own small bit of West Britain cultivates him assiduously, and when such a question as the position of Irish in the National University arises, he naturally and in all good faith leans to the West Briton side. What else could be expected? The West Briton view is that which has been constantly dinned into his ears.

Perhaps, however, he does not go into society at all. In that case, he belongs to one of two categories. He may not be one of those who shape the Episcopal plans. But if, like the late Archbishop Croke, he should chance to be one of the master-minds of the hierarchy, he may succeed during his day, in averting political blunders now and again. There are many who believe, and not without reason, that, had Dr. Croke been alive and present, the Standing Committee would not have been guilty of the colossal folly of publishing the recent Statement. Socially any more than politically West Britain never had any attraction for Dr. Croke; except when the call of duty required his presence elsewhere, he seldom fared far from his residence in Thurles. West Britain, within his own jurisdiction or without, within the Catholic fold or without, knew him not. To the very end his Irish instincts were consequently true and keen. To the very close of life's evening, he was a gifted, unspoiled, large-hearted, great-souled Irishman. West Britain loved him accordingly.

The opposition to an Irish University as well as the countenance given to it by the Episcopal Standing Committee can therefore be easily and obviously explained without looking either to London or to the Vatican. The class who form the backbone of the opposition, the very class with which bishops with social leanings foregather, do not want an Irish University. The reason why Nationalists demand compulsory Irish is precisely the reason why they oppose it. Compulsory Irish would make the National University in some sense Irish, and would ensure that every passing year would intensify its Irish character. Without compulsory Irish, it cannot be Irish at all. There is the whole case in a nutshell. Therein is the explanation and the secret of the opposition. Some opponents are mere pawns, and some are interested parties, but the real opponents are those who do not want an Irish University on any terms whatsoever. Amongst the class to

which they belong, in the circles in which they move, everything Irish is pooh-poohed. Popular opinion is sneered at and scorned. The right of the people to express an opinion, their competence to form one, are not recognised. The country may voice its wishes in every possible way and with all possible emphasis: the Press, public bodies, public meetings, national organisations, are held to have no *locus standi*, not to represent the country—it is only West Britain that counts. The situation forcibly reminds one of the French nobility of the Old Regime. Dearly did they pay for their contempt of the populace, for their scorn of popular rights. Will West Britain push its scorn of Irish Nationalist opinion, its denial of Irish popular rights, to the same insensate extremes? And will the bishops continue to countenance opposition to an Irish University?

THE CARDINAL AND AN IRISH UNIVERSITY,*

By Lex Dubia Non Obligat.

Following up the statement of the Episcopal Standing Committee, his Eminence the Cardinal Primate has contributed a letter to the discussion at present in progress about the status of Irish in the National University. From any point of view, his Eminence's letter can scarcely be regarded as very helpful. For most people it was quite unnecessary that he should have noticed the nonsense that has been written —and which doubtless will continue to be written—about British intrigue and Roman diplomacy. For the small number of people who believe, or pretend to believe, that all the year round Irish affairs form the subject of British intrigue at the centre of Christendom, the Cardinal has written in vain: they are little likely to be influenced by denials or disavowals from any quarter whatever. For all others His Eminence's assurances, in the present instance at all events, were quite unnecessary.

The Cardinal has some interesting things to say on the central topic. He says that "the question in debate is one of means." No matter by whom made, such a statement cannot be allowed to pass. We must insist, with all respect, that the question is not one of means, but one of principle. Nor is it a question of giving Irish and the allied subjects a leading place in the National University, but of making them an essential part of Irish liberal education. We demand an Irish University; we insist on its providing an Irish liberal

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* Sinn Féin, March 6, 1909.

education. Both, we are determined to have, whatever Trinity and Belfast may do. It is no less extraordinary than ludicrous to suggest that Trinity and Belfast should be allowed a perpetual veto on an Irish University. Is that not what is really implied in saying that no conditions should be required for admission to the National University which are not also required for admission to Trinity and the Queen's?

Nobody expects either Trinity College or the Queen's University to be Irish. They make neither profession nor pretence of being anything of the kind. Those who govern both institutions are frankly West Briton; and so in the main are those who patronise the institutions in question. To say, therefore, that the National University cannot and must not be Irish unless Trinity College and the Queen's University are also prepared to be Irish, is in effect to propose that those establishments should for all time be empowered to keep the National University from becoming Irish. If Trinity College and the Queen's University should become Irish in the near or in the far distant future, we shall welcome the change. Whatever the future may bring, at present there is little to encourage such a hope. But the National University is meant for Nationalist Ireland. It is governed by professing Nationalists. Those for whom it is intended, in every way in which they can make their demand articulate, insist peremptorily and all but unanimously that it shall be Irish, and to this end they ask that Irish studies be essential. And Irish the National University must be, and essential therein and for admission thereto must Irish studies be, come what may. Nationalist Ireland is not going to be imposed upon by fallacies and platitudes.

The Cardinal talks of handicapping the National University "by conditions for which the country is not yet ripe, while the doors of other institutions stand wide open, unimpeded by any such conditions." What exactly this may mean, it is difficult to imagine. Does his Eminence mean that the country will not be ripe for the aforesaid "conditions" until "other institutions" are prepared to accept them? If such be his contention, it has already been sufficiently dealt with. Putting such a contention aside as preposterous, the country has been conclusively shown to be quite ripe for the "conditions" which are being insisted upon, much riper than the country was for having English installed as the official language of the College at the foundation of Maynooth, very much riper than it was for having English made the teaching medium all over the country when the National system of primary education was inaugurated. The Irish bishops did not oppose the arrangements made in 1795 and 1832: why do they oppose an Irish University now?

The Cardinal's statement that "the country is not ripe for" an Irish University is on a par with the Archbishop of Tuam's statement that the country is not fit for Home Rule. Both statements are alike devoid of foundation. In the secondary schools which are to supply the National University, over 90 per cent. of the boys, as has been clearly shown, are at present learning Irish. This does not help out the Cardinal's statement. Catholic West Britain does not want Irish. Are we to understand that the country will not be ripe for an Irish University until Catholic West Britain changes its mind? If so, we shall have to wait a long time. There are a few Seminaries in which Irish is not taught; are we to wait upon their pleasure, and will the country not be ripe for an Irish University until they spontaneously fall into line? In some of the larger Colleges, little or no Irish is taught, nor is there apparently any disposition to have it generally taught therein: are we to understand that the country will not be ripe for an Irish University until such Colleges become enthusiastic centres of native studies? If so, the advent of an Irish University is indeed remote.

When would Clongowes become an Irish College of its own volition? Those who know it best can best answer. Quite recently I happened to be discussing the question of an Irish University with a professional man who has taken a prominent part in the language movement. In the course of the discussion, I mentioned Clongowes. "I spent three years there," said my friend, "and as far as Ireland was concerned, I might as well have been in school in Japan." But a few years have elapsed since he left Clongowes, and are we to defer making the National University Irish, until Clongowes becomes Irish by natural evolution?

To say that the country is not ripe for an Irish University is rather diluted moonshine. From every point of view, the country is quite ripe for it. Educationally, we are quite prepared for it. National opinion is overwhelmingly and enthusiastically in favour of it. Catholic West Britain is not in favour of it, and, left to itself, never will be. And Catholic West Britain controls the Senate, and, for the time being, has the ear of the Bishops. Such is the situation with which the country has to deal.

The Bishops, misled by West Briton opinion, have blundered, and badly blundered. The Cardinal now tells us that the question at issue is not a religious question, and "that each one is as free as the winds to hold his own opinion." If the question is not a religious question, why did the Standing Committee take sides? Of course, they had an absolute right to express their opinion. But was it wise to take sides against the people on such a question? And having taken sides, why have recourse to a policy of suppression to screen

an unmistakeable blunder? If the Bishops have an undoubted right to express an opinion on such a question, why is the equally undoubted corresponding right of the clergy practically denied? Have the clergy no rights even in secular matters as against the Bishops. Are they the only persons who in such cases have no rights? The Cardinal speaks of "honest and decent arguments," of "the tendency exhibited to attribute motives, call names, and say things needlessly harsh," all of which merely amounts to an objection to unmask the real character of the opposition to an Irish University.

The Cardinal says further that English Catholics "have Universities of their own, not one whit less Christian or less Catholic, in principle, than the proposed National University," and adds that "they have safeguards, too, provided for them just as effectual as any we may be able to provide for our Irish Catholic youth." The English Catholics have Universities which are much more Christian in principle. Legally and in principle, the National University is absolutely un-Christian. Long ago the Irish bishops refused a Catholic University. At present all they have got is a Catholic Senate. How long will they be able to keep it? West Britain certainly cannot maintain it for them, and, if it could, would probably have very little disposition to do so. That Nationalist Ireland, if met in a friendly spirit, could and would perpetuate the Catholic character of the Senate and of the University is humanly speaking certain. But the Bishops have done much to antagonise those who would naturally be the surest support of Catholic interests, and have virtually taken sides with those from whom, on Catholic grounds, least support is to be expected. In acting as they have done, the Bishops have displayed singular blindness; and, worse still, they have frowned upon those who have championed the policy which is best for Catholic as well as for National interests.

In an article, ascribed to Dr. Yorke, which has recently appeared in several journals, we read: "We greatly fear that the Bishops have given another handle to those who would secularise education in Ireland. It is a historical fact that the most dangerous enemy religion has is an alienated National sentiment, as its most powerful prop is a friendly National sentiment." Of the value to religion of a friendly National sentiment, Ireland is a standing proof. Of the folly, from the point of view of religious interests, of alienating National sentiment, Europe is unfortunately strewn with examples.

AN IRISH UNIVERSITY: TUAM IN ERUPTION,*

By An Irish Priest.

Several days have elapsed since the detailed report of a recent meeting of the Committee of the Connacht Irish College was made public. The meeting of which there is question was held in the Town Hall, Tuam. It was presided over by the Archbishop of Tuam. The proceedings, as reported, are sufficient to stagger humanity. They have made us all stare and gasp, and wonder if the consummation of all things be at hand. The universal belief must have been that the accuracy of the report given to the public as official, would at once be called in question by the Archbishop, or on his behalf. There has been no contradiction. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that the accuracy of the report could not be questioned; and that, incredible as it appears, it must nevertheless be regarded as an accurate record of what took place on the occasion.

The proceedings at the Tuam meeting fall naturally into two sections. There was, first, the appointment of a Head Master to the Connacht Irish College. On that head, I would say that, in my opinion, Dr. Henry ought not to have allowed himself to be put forward as a candidate, unless he actually saw his way to take up the duties of the office on the ordinary terms, and during the entire period to be covered by the work of the College. It is ridiculous to suppose that any Head Master of a College situated at Partry could do his duties, even indifferently, from Dublin. The Head Master should be on the spot. No one should be constituted Head Master unless one who could always be at his post. Dr. Henry was, therefore, to blame in allowing himself to be placed in a false position; but much more to blame were those who were responsible for placing him in that position. When his supporters found that he could not be Head Master in fact as well as in name, they ought not to have put him forward for the position. So much do I deem it but fair to say.

But whatever may be said of the action of Dr. Henry and his supporters on the Committee, their mistakes, if any, are venial compared with those of the Chairman of the meeting. On what ground his refusal to put Dr. Henry's name to the meeting could be justified, it is perfectly impossible to imagine. Equally impossible is it to conceive on what ground he could justify his threat to appoint one of the other candidates, if the meeting separated without appointing him. He

* Sinn Féin, March 18, 1909.

had no such power as he claimed; and that he should have imagined himself possessed of such power is utterly incomprehensible. Whether the school buildings belong to him or not I cannot say; but neither in law nor equity does he own the College, nor could he have, on his own responsibility, made any appointment therein. If the building is his, he could, of course, have withdrawn it; but to appoint to any position in the College was entirely beyond his competence. That power is indubtiably vested in the Committee, which represents all those who have provided the funds necessary to establish the College and to carry it on.

From the proceedings it is quite plain that under no circumstances would the Archbishop have agreed to Dr. Henry's appointment. There must be some reason for his Grace's objection to him; and, therefore, it seems a pity that the Doctor was allowed to come before the meeting on a footing different from that of the other candidates. This gave his Grace the shadow of a reason for refusing to submit his name to the meeting. I know not what the members of the Committee propose to do; but if they allow themselves to be bullied and browbeaten out of the exercise of their simple and obvious rights, I know what the country will think of them. It is hard to see how things can remain in the condition in which they now are. The Committee has been overridden. Its most elementary rights have been trampled on. If it is not prepared to assert itself, the sooner it disbands the better.

Extraordinary as was the Archbishop's action in reference to the Headmastership of the Connacht Irish College, it was eminently reasonable compared with his action at a subsequent stage of the proceedings. When Colonel Moore brought forward his resolution dealing with the status of Irish in the National University, his Grace disported himself in a fashion which deserves to live in history, which ought to make history, and which is extremely likely to do both. I think the Irish bishops must be wishing that his Grace had not attended the meeting, or that Colonel Moore's resolution had not come before it, or at all events that the proceedings had not been made public. The publication of the Statement of the Standing Committee was a sufficiently bad mistake in all conscience. The eruption in Tuam out-herods Herod. Anything so intolerant, so indefensible, so absurd, has not happened for many a long day.

The Archbishop refused to accept Colonel Moore's resolution. He said that if he allowed it to come formally before the meeting he would "not be a loyal bishop." He ought to know best what episcopal loyalty requires. But the Committee had a right to discuss the resolution, and to pass it if they thought proper. His Grace had no right to prevent it

from coming formally before them. He had undoubtedly a right to leave the chair if he could not acquiesce in the resolution; but he certainly had neither right, nor shadow of right, to deal with the Committee in such a high-handed manner.

The Archbishop does not know "how any priest who supports such a resolution (as Colonel Moore's) can consider himself a loyal priest." His Grace is free to decide for himself what loyalty demands at his hands. But in the present case he has no right whatever to fix a standard of loyalty for priests. No priest is likely to trouble much as to what his views are. Certain it is that no priest owes any duty of loyalty to episcopal blundering in regard to secular matters. It is rather the other way. Priests who are convinced that mistakes have been made, and are being made, have the duty rather of endeavouring to minimise as much as possible the consequences of such blundering. For the interests of Church and country, that is manifestly the wise and proper course to take: that way really lies loyalty, not in the direction indicated by the Archbishop of Tuam.

"The Bishops of Ireland have spoken on the point, and their decision binds." So we are told by His Grace of Tuam.

The Bishops of Ireland have not spoken; only the Standing Committee. This point is not, however, worth insisting on; for the Standing Committee represents the Bishops, and their pronouncements are those of the Bishops, unless recalled or repudiated. But "their decision" does not bind; for there was no decision, only a statement. Further, they could not on such a question have issued a binding decision. Lastly, they make it clear that they did not intend to bind anyone. His Grace's statement as to the binding character of the document is quite absurd.

Even with the Cardinal His Grace breaks a lance. "It was a matter for fair discussion before they (the Standing Committee) spoke, but not since, and I cannot understand how the Cardinal can maintain that it is not a matter of conscience, for I hold it a serious matter of conscience to do anything which will drive students to Trinity College." For sheer absurdity this may defy comparison. The question before the country, according to His Grace, ceased to be a debateable question the very moment the Standing Committee declared it to be a fair matter for discussion! This is simply ludicrous. The Standing Committee did not say "was," but "is." And in any case they could not issue a binding decision on the question before them. It was not a question involving issues of faith or morals. Dr. Healy says it is a matter of conscience. So it is. So is every thought, word, deed, and omission—that is to say, a matter for the individual conscience; for we are all responsible for the morality of our

acts, and bound by the law of conscience. But even the Archbishop of Tuam will, I hope, see a difference between claiming for conscience its lawful dominion, and claiming for the Bishops a right to issue pronouncements, binding in conscience, about human affairs of every category and description. My conscience binds me to do what I believe to be right; but outside questions directly affecting faith and morals, the Bishops have no power to bind me in conscience to do anything.

"Now, I know Catholics," says the Archbishop, "I met them in Dublin and elsewhere, who told me they would not allow their sons to learn Irish, and I cannot do anything that will prevent them from going into the new University, and drive them into Trinity College. I hold that it is a matter of conscience; and I will do all in my power to oppose making Irish compulsory in the new University." This is absolutely pitiable. How the Bishops must have squirmed when they read it! Well might they have said, "Save us from our friends!" The claims put forward on their behalf are utterly untenable. They would be laughed out of any tribunal in the world. As a body, the Bishops would not dream of advancing them. That they should be advanced by any Bishop, can only harm the entire Episcopate and its genuine claims.

No doubt people have told Dr. Healy that they will not allow their sons to learn Irish. Is not that what we have been saying from the very outset of the present agitation? Is not that what Dr. Delany said months ago? Doubtless there are West Britons who do not wish an Irish University, who detest Irish and all that it represents and symbolises. But are they to be allowed to determine the character of the University? Must Ireland swallow a West Briton University, solely because they object to an Irish University? Dr. Healy says, yes; says that it is a matter of conscience; says that he cannot do anything that will keep people away from the National University, and send them to Trinity.

He is quite mistaken. The West Britons will not go to the National University in any case. Irish or no Irish, most of them will go to Trinity. If Irish be made obligatory, they will seize upon that as an excuse; if not, they will find some other excuse. Some of them will go to the National University, no matter what happens. They now say they will not, just to help the campaign for a West Britain University. They tell Dr. Healy so. But whilst they will fight against an Irish University to the last ditch, they will, if beaten, fall into line. Dr. Healy would, if he could, allow them to brow-beat Ireland, just as he himself did brow-beat the Committee of the Connacht Irish College.

But why is His Grace not consistent. He "cannot do anything that will prevent" his West Briton friends in Dublin and elsewhere "from going into the new University,

and drive them to Trinity College." But the sons of Connacht peasants, of Connacht professional men, even of the Nationalist gentry of Connacht—persons like Colonel Moore, for example—for them he has a different rule. He is quite prepared to do what will "prevent them from going into the new University, and drive them to Trinity College." or anywhere else. The following is interesting. Colonel Moore said:—"But, your Grace, if Irish is not made compulsory, it will turn a far larger number away from the University; for there are many men in Ireland who will not send their sons to the new University, if it is such as you wish to make it. I have sons and I would prefer to send them to Trinity rather than to a University where the Irish language and literature were not obligatory." Whereto His Grace replied, "You can do that if you like." There is no objection, therefore, to do what will prevent Nationalists from sending their sons to the new University; nor is it a matter of conscience. It only becomes a matter of conscience when West Britons—from Merrion Square or elsewhere—are in question. We are undoubtedly getting on.

But the cream of the Archieposcopal outburst, is the tirade uttered against the people—charged with contempt, bitterness, intolerance. "Besides that," said Colonel Moore, "the people of Ireland have spoken with no uncertain voice in favour of Irish, and their opinions should be respected." Replied His Grace: "The people of Ireland, indeed! What do they know about it? Do you mean to tell me that the fellows who kicked football here a few days ago, and held a meeting here, know or understood what they were talking about? I would not give a pinch of snuff for their opinion. What do they know about it?" So here we have the Co. and Borough Councils, the General Council of County Councils, the U. I. League Convention, and hundreds of other bodies whose members are just as competent to form an opinion as His Grace, and who have as undubitably a right to do so, all classed with "the fellows who kicked football here the other day," and ruled summarily out of the discussion.

The Standing Committee protested against the treatment meted out to the Senate. Will they again assemble to protest against the outrageous insult offered to Nationalist Ireland by the Archbishop of Tuam? Hitherto Dr. MacWalter has been the most considerable asset the advocates of an Irish University possessed. He must henceforward yield place to the successor of MacHale in the See of Tuam.

II

ESSAYS ON UNIVERSITY AND KINDRED SUBJECTS.

THE EPISCOPATE AND THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.*

BY

CLERICUS.

An attempt, which seems to have met with considerable favour in and out of Parliament and on both sides of the Channel, is at present being made to settle the time-honoured and all but insoluble Irish University question. At such a juncture it seems to the writer that it may not be devoid of interest and instruction to recall the history of an unsuccessful and practically forgotten effort made exactly forty years ago to find a solution for the very same question. With the various attempts made since and previously—the establishment of the Queen's Colleges and the Queen's University, the establishment of the Catholic University for some time presided over by Newman, the passing of Fawcett's Act for the secularisation of Trinity College and the Dublin University, the Bill introduced by Gladstone in 1873, and the establishment of the Royal University—all who take any interest in the question are pretty familiar. Of an effort at settlement which seems to me to have been in most respects far more hopeful and satisfactory than any hitherto made, the same can scarcely be said.

The history of the effort to which I refer is compendiously set forth in an article entitled "University Education in Ireland," which appeared in the "Dublin Review" of January, 1890. In that article, after detailing the history of the previous efforts to settle the question, the writer thus proceeds:—

> The Earl of Mayo now appears upon the scene, and announced the Government proposals in the House of Commons on the 10th of March, 1868, and a few days afterwards sent a memorandum to the Archbishop of Cashel, in which he proposes for the first time to create a Catholic University "which as far as circumstances would permit, should stand in the same position to Roman Catholics as Trinity College does to Protestants: that is to say, that the governing body should consist of, and the teaching should be conducted mainly by Roman Catholics, but that full security should be taken that no religious influence should be brought to bear on students who belonged to another faith." This was hopeful so far; but in carrying out these general principles Lord Mayo made some fatal mistakes.
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> The proposal now made is as follows:—That a Charter for a Roman Catholic University should be granted to the following persons to be named in the Charter: A Chancellor, a Vice-Chancellor, four prelates, the President of Maynooth, six laymen, the heads of the colleges proposed to be affiliated, and five members to be elected, one by each of the five faculties in the affiliated college or colleges.

* Sinn Féin, April 18, 1908.

The future Senate should be formed as follows:—A Chancellor, to be elected by Convocation; a Vice-Chancellor, to be appointed by the Chancellor; four prelates to be nominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy; the President of Maynooth; six laymen. to be elected by Convocation; the heads of the affiliated colleges; five members to be elected by the Faculties, as before mentioned. The Senate would be twenty in number, all being members of the Roman Catholic Church. Convocation to consist of the Chancellor, Senate, Professors, and Graduates.

Until the Colleges are firmly established it may be proper to postpone the question of endowment. It is one of great difficulty, and need not form an indispensable portion of the plan.

It may, however, be necessary to ask Parliament to provide a sufficient sum for the payment of the expenses of the Examinations, for the foundation of a certain number of University Scholarships, and the giving away of prizes, and also the payment of the salaries of certain officers and servants of the University, and perhaps some provision for a University Hall and Examination Rooms.

Dr. Leahy, of Cashel, and Dr. Derry, of Clonfert, were deputed to confer with the Ministers on this project, and in their observations, which they committed to writing, they raise two main objections, and offer two suggestions that deserve to be carefully noted. They object to the Senate having a veto on the appointment of the heads and professors of the affiliated colleges, but that was a point which very likely the Government would not press; and, secondly, they object to the Chancellor and the six lay members of the Senate being chosen by Convocation, and not by the Senate itself. It does not appear to be a matter of vital importance, at least so far as the election of the six laymen is concerned.

The suggestions made are much of greater importance. It was suggested:—

First—That the Chancellor should be always a Bishop, and that the first Chancellor should be Cardinal Cullen.

Secondly—That as faith and morality may be injuriously affected either by the heterodox teaching of professors, lecturers, and other officers, or by their bad moral example, or by the introduction of bad books into the University programme, the very least power that could be claimed for the Bishops on the Senate, with a view to the counteracting of such evils, would be that of an absolute negative on such books and on the first nomination of professors, etc., etc., as well as on their continuing to hold their offices after having been judged by the Bishops on the Senate to have grievously offended against faith or morals.

Here is the rock on which the whole project was wrecked. Except the power indicated in this paragraph were *in some way* secured to the Bishops, it could not be called a Catholic University at all, and the Bishops could not, without foregoing a right essentially inherent in their office, take any part in its government as a Catholic institution. Any other point they might concede—but this point they could not concede without at the same time foregoing the exercise of a divine right which belongs to them, and to them alone, as pastors of their flocks. The two prelates put it as clearly and curtly as possible:—"According to the doctrine and discipline of the Catholic Church it is not competent for laymen, nor even for clergymen of the second order, however learned, to judge authoritatively of faith and morality. This is the exclusive province of Bishops." Yet the Government replied to this clear *non possumus* of the Bishops with an equally emphatic *non volumus*:—"The proposition that the episcopal members of the Senate should possess any power greater than their lay colleagues is one that Her Majesty's Government cannot entertain." And so Lord Mayo's famous proposal to create a Catholic University came to grief.

Such then in brief is the history of one of the many attempts made to settle the University question—recited partly in the words of the official documents, partly by one of the Bishops; for the article aforesaid is credited to "John Healy, D.D., Senator of the Royal University," whom no one will have any difficulty in recognising as the present Archbishop of Tuam.

The narrative is dismal reading. The fate of the effort then made to lay the foundation at least of a satisfactory or tolerable settlement of a vexed question is sufficient almost to make one despair of the possibility of a settlement, as long as the Episcopate are one of the parties to the negotiations. Until the Bishops shall have formally signified their approval of the Bill now before the House of Commons, it would be in the last degree unwise to assume that it is safe; that their Lordships will not act with quite as much unwisdom as they did exactly forty years ago, that they will not again send the Catholics of this country to wander needlessly in the higher educational wilderness for a further term of greater or less duration. Certain it is that refusal to accept the present Bill would not be as great a blunder as the refusal of Lord Mayo's offer; and the body that wrecked the more satisfactory scheme of settlement cannot be absolutely trusted in advance not to wreck the less satisfactory.

To make the folly of the rejection of Lord Mayo's proposals as clear as possible, as well as incidentally to emphasise the dangers of the present situation, it will be useful to bring into juxtaposition some of the more important details of the Schemes of 1868 and 1908.

1. Lord Mayo's proposals guaranteed a Senate exclusively Catholic; the present Bill offers nothing of the kind. According to the present scheme, the initial Senate (which is to start the University and hold office for five years), will have seven Protestants amongst its thirty-five members. When five years shall have elapsed the various interests empowered to nominate, elect, or co-opt members will have an absolutely free hand. Lord Mayo's plan guaranteed four episcopal members of the Senate permanently; the present Bill guarantees none at all, and will give none as a matter of right.

Lord Mayo's plan formally required only six laymen, to be chosen by Convocation, on a Senate to consist of twenty members, although doubtless a few more laymen would sooner or later have found themselves members of the Senate as representatives of the Faculties; the present Bill does not formally guarantee the presence on the Senate of a single ecclesiastic, high or low; and such ecclesiastics as find their way on to the Senate shall do so as nominees of the Crown, or as the perfectly free choice of the collegiate Governing Bodies, or of the Graduates, or of the majority of the Senate.

In a word, Lord Mayo's plan formally guaranteed a Senate composed to a man of Catholics, and was meant to have resulted in a Senate predominantly clerical and largely Episcopal. Mr. Birrell's proposals do not formally guarantee a Catholic Senate, or even a Senate containing a single Catholic, whilst they are meant to result *de facto* in a Senate, of which the clerical members, the episcopal members included, will constitute a very small minority. From this point of view therefore much progress does not appear to have been made as the fruit of forty years of agitation and self-denial, in the matter of higher education.

2. Forty years ago we were offered a Catholic University, a University in the words of its sponsor, "which, as far as circumstances would permit, should stand in the same position to Roman Catholics as Trinity College does to Protestants." What are we now offered? Well—I shall not say! Remember that forty years ago "a University as Catholic as Trinity College is Protestant" meant vastly more in the direction of the Catholic ideal than it means now. Trinity College was then an absolutely Protestant institution, in law as well as in fact. Fawcett's Act had not then found its way to the Statute Book. In the interval it has ceased to be Protestant by law, although no doubt it is still Protestant in fact. Even in this respect, however, it is certainly not so Protestant now as it then was. In these latter days we are wont to hear it said, and some of us are rather fond of saying that what we want is not a Catholic University, but a University or a University College for Catholics, a University or a University College as Catholic as Trinity College is Protestant, and Catholic in precisely the same sense in which Trinity College is Protestant. But how are we to explain the fact that when Trinity was still more Protestant than it is in our day, when it was Protestant in quite another sense, when the concession of a University or College as Catholic as Trinity College was Protestant would have meant vastly more to us than a similar concession would or could now mean, we refused through our Episcopate, to accept such a University. We were offered a University in regard to which formal legal guarantees were to have been given "that the governing body should consist of, and the teaching should be conducted mainly by Roman Catholics, but that full security should be taken that no religious influence should be brought to bear on students who belonged to another faith"; in plain language, we were offered a University as Catholic as it could be made by a legally guaranteed Catholic governing body, which would be predominantly Catholic, and a teaching staff mainly Catholic, and doubtless largely clerical, the University, to be, however, subject to a Conscience Clause. A University such as I have described we refused twice "twenty golden years ago." We

are now offered a University without tests for officers, teachers, or students. We get no guarantee of orthodoxy except such as is incidentally afforded by a governing body for which there are to be no tests, whose members need not be Catholics, though in fact most of them will doubtless be so, at least at the outset. On that Governing Body clergymen will not have a legal right to a single seat. As a matter of fact, it is intended that from the very outset the clerical members of the Governing Body shall be a very small minority. Such is the University we are now offered! and yet most people fervently hope that we may not be foolish enough to refuse it. But wherein have we bettered our position by forty weary years of waiting and agitating, by yielding up all the prizes and advantages of higher education to others during all that long period?

3. The Episcopate objected to Lord Mayo's scheme because, amongst other things, it was to provide that the Chancellor and the six lay members were to be "chosen by Convocation, and not by the Senate itself." Was there ever such solemn trifling? Surely, Dr. Healy is more than mild when he observes by way of comment: "It does not appear to be a matter of vital importance, at least so far as the election of the six laymen is concerned." Just compare what was then proposed under this head with what is now proposed. Convocation now, as then, is to have the power of electing six members of the Senate.* There is, however, this slight difference. In 1868 they should all have been Catholics; when the present proposals come into force, if they ever do, the six members elected by Convocation may, in theory and in law, be all Jews or Mahommedans.

4. In 1868 the Bishops desired that the Chancellor should always be a Bishop; in 1908 it scarcely seems to be regarded as vital that he should be a Catholic! In 1868 they objected to his being chosen by Convocation; in 1908 it does not seem clear how he is to be provided, probably by the Crown, nor does anybody appear to care.†

5. In 1868 it was insisted upon "as the very least power that could be claimed for the Bishops on the Senate," that "as faith and morality may be injuriously affected either by the heteredox teaching of professors, etc., or by their bad moral example, or by the introduction of bad books into the University programme," [the Episcopal members of the Senate, and they alone and exclusively] "should have an absolute negative on such books, and on the first nomination of professors, etc., etc., as well as on their continuing to hold their offices after having been judged by the Bishops on the Senate to have grievously offended against faith and morals."

* Since raised to eight.

† By convocation after the first appointment: first appointment by Senate.

"Here," wrote Dr. Healy in 1890, "is the rock on which the whole project was wrecked. Except the power indicated in this paragraph were *in some way* secured to the Bishops, it could not be called a Catholic University at all, and the Bishops could not, without foregoing a right essentially inherent in their office, take any part in its government as a Catholic institution." What, I wonder, would Dr. Healy now say to what he then wrote? Suppose it could not be called a Catholic University, why not call it a University for Catholics? Suppose their Lordships could not take any part in its government as a Catholic institution, could they not have taken some small part in its government as an institution designed mainly, if not exclusively, for Catholics? And if they could not have done so in 1868, can they do so in 1908 or later? A vast quantity of water has flown under the bridges of Ulster, Leinster, Connacht, and Munster since March 10, 1868; and in view of the gradual attenuation of the Episcopal demands, Dr. Healy's words of well-nigh twenty years ago, true and incontrovertible as they are in the abstract, are calculated to provoke a smile. "Except the power indicated were *in some way*," etc. We have grown older: have we grown wiser? Forty years ago we refused the substance of a Catholic University at the hands of a Protestant and foreign Government merely through pedantic insistence on terms and technicalities; we shall never again have the refusal of such an offer at the hands of a Protestant Government, or of any other.

As to securing to the Episcopal members of the Senate *in some way* the power referred to, was there not a perfectly simple and obvious way of securing it, to wit, by trusting the Senate? How could they have hoped that a Protestant Government would have conceded this demand of theirs directly, whilst a Senate wholly Catholic and mainly clerical would have done so as a matter of course; for every Catholic is bound by his creed to believe that Bishops are the official judges of all matters of faith and morals, and every instructed Catholic does believe it. In offering them such a Senate, the Government, as a matter of fact, did indirectly guarantee them the control over faith and morals which they demanded. But for the safe-guarding of their God-given rights, the guarantees of a foreign Government and the enactments of a foreign Parliament, evidently counted far more with them than the faith, loyalty, and devotion of their own flock, priests and people. It is not the only occasion in which they have spurned the guarantee which, of all others, ought to count for most in their eyes, and shown their distrust of the laity as well as of "clergymen of the second order"; and undoubtedly not with the most satisfactory results. Whether higher, or secondary, or primary education is in question, no

one is to be relied upon but a Bishop, and a distrust of the people as unwise as it is incomprehensible is not infrequently displayed. In England and in the United States the clergy are obliged by circumstances to largely trust their people, and the Episcopate to trust clergy and people. They do so, on the whole, with, as might be expected, the best results. In no country on earth is there less reason to distrust the people, in any respect, than there is in Ireland, if their whole history is to count for anything; and yet, in no country does there seem to be so much reluctance to trust them.

Be this as it may, in 1868 a Catholic Senate, for the greater part clerical in its constitution, could apparently not be trusted to practically recognise the essential and God-given rights of the Bishops. To-day, however, the Episcopate is invited to take its chance, without any formal guarantees of any kind, with a Senate which need not be Catholic, appointed to rule a University absolutely free from tests!

Could a greater blunder have been committed, or, in the circumstances of the case, even imagined, than the rejection of Lord Mayo's proposals, on the grounds on which they were rejected, or on any grounds? There was to be no immediate endowment of a College or Colleges, it is true; but according to Lord Mayo's memorandum, the endowment question was merely postponed. If the University had been accepted, endowment would have inevitably followed. In any case, the want of endowment had clearly nothing whatever to do with the rejection. The proposals were rejected solely because the Government would not formally recognise and legally guarantee claims which the Episcopate does not now dream of directly advancing, and which, though indefeasible in the eyes of Catholics, no Protestant Government would entertain for a moment.

The refusal of the University which Lord Mayo offered was a sad and grievous blunder; that is, doubtless, why we hear so little of that episode in the history of the University question. It need surprise nobody that the Bishops should desire to let it rest. To disentomb it certainly yields no pleasure to the writer; but he is not without his fears that further bad blunders are possibly or probably threatening, and the folly of 1868 may, perhaps, serve as a warning to us all.

The refusal of Lord Mayo's proposals is not the only undoubted blunder to be credited to the Bishops. Matters about which there may be legitimate difference of opinion I pass by; only mistakes which are perfectly apparent do I touch upon. In my judgment the refusal of 1868 was the worst blunder by a long way, but there have been others.

Amongst them was the withdrawal of the students of Maynooth from the Royal University when that institution was yet in its infancy. For that mistake their Lordships were wholly and

solely responsible. The blunder then committed they made a belated attempt to repair a few years ago, but only when the Report of the Robertson Commission had thrown them into a panic, and they had begun to apprehend that Maynooth should be altogether ignored in the approaching University settlement. At the present moment they are largely obliged to rely, and do rely, on the slight foothold which so brief a connection has secured for them to preserve them from being ignored. But if a belated and brief association of this kind with the Royal University should give the College any claim to consideration, what is it in comparison with the claim which an uninterrupted connection of more than a quarter of a century would have assured it? And think moreover of all the moral and material advantages such a connection would have brought to the College and to several generations of its students.

Yet another serious and unaccountable blunder was made by their Lordships when, recently, in a moment of panic, they lowered the status of the national language in Maynooth, and dealt its prestige a severe blow, and this in pursuit of advantages problematical at best, and quite insignificant in comparison with the interests which were assailed.

It is earnestly to be hoped that their Lordships will endeavour to recall, as far as may be, the blunders which stand to their account, and endeavour to avoid similar or greater blunders in the future. By their refusal to accept Lord Mayo's proposals they have deprived several generations of Catholics of the opportunity of University education; and meanwhile they have simply lost ground. They seem ready now to accept much less than they then refused. By withdrawing the students fully a quarter of a century ago from the Royal University, they dealt Maynooth a bad blow, and now in a panic they send them back again. By their foolish regulation against the Irish language they have antagonised the Gaelic League and the whole of Irish Ireland; and they did this for reasons of a very flimsy character. For their own credit, and for sake of the interests they value most, as well as for Ireland's sake, one would like to hope that they are by this time as well aware as is everybody else that they made a bad mistake, and that they will have the courage to recede on the first opportunity from an untenable and unpatriotic position.

The near future may test the Episcopate even more than the past has done; and it is not at all impossible that, as on critical occasions in the past, they may again blunder badly. I refer now not to the attitude which they may assume towards the Bill before Parliament. I refer rather to what may happen, in case the proposals of the Bill be accepted and the University be established. Their Lordships will then have to decide whether they will allow the Irish priests of the future to receive their general education at the University or not; a more important question could scarcely fall to be decided by any body of men. If the

Bishops had not made so many bad blunders in matters educational in the past, one would feel less anxious as to their decision on this question. It is to be feared that they will try to get Maynooth recognised as an affiliated College. If they succeed, they will be content; if they fail, they may, not improbably, turn their backs on the University altogether.

To send the students to the University, to secure for them, under proper discipline and safeguards, the best education to be had there is obviously the proper course to pursue; that, together with the establishment of a thorough living Theological Faculty therein. But just because it is the proper, and only proper, thing to do, one cannot help having misgivings that it may not be done. To accept Lord Mayo's proposals was also the proper thing to do, but it was not done. To continue the early connection of Maynooth with the Royal University was the proper thing to do, but it was not done. To avoid interfering with the status which the Irish language had long enjoyed in Maynooth was quite manifestly the proper thing to do, but it was not done. The Bishops sorely need to be reminded that what was good enough for fifty years ago is not good enough for to-day, and what is good enough for to-day will be somewhat out of date fifty years hence. It is not a remarkable proof of wisdom or of statesmanship, civil or ecclesiastical, to do the proper thing fifty years, or twenty-five years, or even twelve months after date. There I leave the matter.

The writer has no interest to serve except the interests of Ireland, and of the religion of which he is a minister, and, in his conscience and before God, he is convinced that his zeal for both is as honest and single-minded as that of any prelate who ever ruled an Irish See.

THE PROPOSED IRISH UNIVERSITIES.*

By Hibernus.

The draft Charters of the contemplated Irish Universities have been published. One is now in a position to examine and form an opinion upon the Government's proposals in their totality. The Bill and its schedules have been public property for some time. The documents just made public, taken in connection therewith, make clearly manifest what it is that Mr. Birrell and his Government purpose to do. The time is not inopportune to make at least a few preliminary comments on some points in the Government's scheme—points which seem to the writer to be of special interest and importance.

Right in the forefront I would place what appears to be the Government's view as to the relative importance, in matters academical and educational, of Irish Catholics and Irish Pro-

*The *Leader*, May 2, 1908.

testants. In Dublin the Government proposes to establish a University which, though theoretically undenominational, is undisguisedly meant to be in the main a University for Catholics. In Belfast, on the other hand, it is proposed to establish a University, similarly undenominational on paper, but meant mainly for Protestants, more particularly for Presbyterians. In Dublin there exists already a University, also undenominational in theory and in the eye of the law, but founded for Episcopalian Protestants, and, as a matter of fact, still all but exclusively enjoyed by them. Now, observe these further facts. The Government of the existing Protestant Episcopalian University is exclusively Protestant. It is proposed to make the Government of the proposed Northern University all but exclusively Protestant, the Catholic Church, to which belongs half the population of Ulster, being represented on the Senate in the proportion of one to thirty-five.* The Catholic half of the population of Ulster is, it would seem, worth exactly one-thirty-fifth of the Protestant half. Over against this, it is proposed to give to Protestants, who are to have practically the exclusive control of two Universities, one-fifth of the membership of the Senate of the undenominational University designed to meet the higher educational needs of Catholics,

All this is utterly intolerable. How long is the assumed superiority of Irish Protestants over Irish Catholics to be tamely acquiesced in? The Government assumes it. Irish Protestants themselves assume it, of course. It would seem that Irish Catholics assume it likewise. At all events they do not challenge it, repudiate it, resent it. They do not see, or they are so servile and mean-souled that they elect not to see, the implied, but gross, insult offered to them. When shall we cease to be social helots and to demean ourselves as such? When shall we cease to kiss the rod of ascendancy?

This is a matter which must be taken in hands. No matter who may acquiesce in the proposals of the Government, they constitute, as they stand, an outrageous insult to Irish Catholics. The craven-souled, those in high places, even clerics of all ranks, may choose to kiss the rod; but it is to be hoped that the general body of Irish Catholics will insist through their representatives, and that their representatives will of themselves have manhood enough to insist, that the proposals be so changed as to put Catholics on a footing of equality with others. If Protestants are to constitute one-fifth of the Senate of the University which is to have its seat in Dublin, then let Catholics constitute one-fifth of the Senate of the University which is to have its seat in Belfast; or otherwise, let there be one Protestant on the Dublin Senate and one Catholic on the Belfast Senate. Personally, I should prefer equality obtained by giving the Catholics of Ulster more representation on the Belfast Senate. But no matter how it is to be attained, equality there should be.

* Since above was written this injustice has been somewhat remedied.

Confining ourselves to the University which is to have its seat in Dublin, there are things that will astonish, and in some cases amuse, those who study the various documents carefully. The constitution of the Senate is in some respects extraordinary. Some names occur whose presence there must cause mystification throughout all the earth, yea, even in the breast of the man in the moon. On what grounds of academic distinction, or educational service or experience, or literary or public eminence of any kind, they got there, even the Judgment Day will scarcely reveal. From attempting to explain the inexplicable, I modestly shrink. Let those whose delight it is to attempt the solution of the seemingly insoluble, attack the problem, if they list; but it may well, indeed, be that it transcends the powers of any man ever born of woman.

The utterly undue predominance in the Senate of members of the medical profession is another strange phenomenon. More than twenty-five per cent. of the Senators seem to be medical men. This is, in sooth, quite a marvellous fact. I do not think that it is in any way capable of defence; and before the Bill is passed I hope that an attempt will be made to render the Senate more representative of all the professions and learned classes. Whilst the medical profession absorbs more than one-fourth of the Senate, the clerical profession, in all its ranks, has only had one-seventh of the Senate assigned to it. There are two members of the Episcopate, and three priests. Now, when we consider the representation allowed, whether intentionally or otherwise, to the medical profession, and when we consider, above all, the predominant share that the clergy have in secondary and higher education, the representation of the clergy and the contrast noted are quite grotesque.

Could anything be more absurd and ludicrous than to give women one-thirty-fifth of the representation on the Senate of a University whereof the Charter says:—"Women shall be eligible equally with men to be members of the University or of any authority of the University, and to hold any office or enjoy any advantages of the University"? Surely, if women are thus admitted on terms of absolute equality with men, they ought to have, pending the election of the Senate academically (at the end of five years), some effective representation on the Senate. To admit them on terms of equality, and then to assign them representation on the Senate in the ratio of one to thirty-five, seems to be a Birrellesque joke. One sixth of the Crown nominations to the Senate is to be permanently reserved for women:—and then they are to have their chance in open competition for co-option as well as for Convocation and other appointments. All this being so, on what possible ground can reasonable, if not proportional, representation be denied them on the original Senate? I cannot see any. There are plenty of distinguished University women; and as there are on the Senate, as tentatively constituted, some members who have no earthly claim to be there, surely it is even

yet possible to make a somewhat more equitable distribution of the places between men and women.

Looking at the Senate from an Irish-Ireland point of view, it is very unpromising indeed. So much is this the case, that the necessity of guaranteeing the status of the language by statute, and of thus making it independent of the Senate, or of any other body, becomes every day more apparent and urgent. The more one considers the question, the clearer is it that the point on which Irish-Ireland should concentrate all its forces is to secure that from the outset, and, by the statutes, Irish must be an obligatory subject for matriculation.

The following excerpt from the draft Charter is important:—"The Statutes of the University shall prescribe general conditions respecting the studies to be required as qualifications for the Degrees of the University, or for the Diplomas or Certificates of the University, including the *subjects* which shall respectively be studied for the several Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates." Now, if the statutes prescribe the *conditions* and *subjects* for Degrees, etc., it is plain that they will also prescribe the *conditions* and *subjects* for matriculation. From the schedules to the Bill we know that the statutes are to be drawn up by the Statutory Committee; and we further know that the Statutory Committee is to consist of seven members—three to be nominated by the Crown and four to be elected by the Senate, presumably from its own members. We see, therefore, how important, from an Irish-Ireland standpoint, (1) the Statutes, (2) the Statutory Committee, and (3) the original Senate will be. It is clear that the Irish-Ireland battle must be won or lost before the Statutes come into force. Once they acquire the force of law, it will be very difficult, and for many years wholly impossible, to get them changed in any important particular. This is, of course, obvious in itself, and the draft Charter places it beyond doubt. It is time, therefore, for Irish-Ireland to address itself with all energy to a combined and strenuous effort to secure for the national language, from the outset, and for all time, its proper place in the curriculum, life and activities of the University. If further time is lost, it will have ample opportunity to deplore its apathy.

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION:

SOME ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR COLLEGES.*

By Volenti Non Fit Injuria.

Before Mr. Birrell's Irish Universities Bill comes up again for discussion in the House of Commons, and whilst consequently any

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*The *Leader*, May 9, 1908.

points that are not regarded as satisfactory or quite free from obscurity may be profitably discussed, it will not be amiss to fasten attention upon some features of the Birrell proposals, which certainly are not quite clear, as also upon a few which I, at least, cannot regard as satisfactory. May I observe, at the same time, that it certainly seems regrettable that so little attention appears to be paid to these proposals? Alike on national, educational and financial grounds they need the most careful and thorough examination. It is scarcely too much to expect that those who, from any point of view, have a right to be considered specialists, should take the public into their confidence and give them the benefit of such views as they may have formed.

Of the importance of the issues at stake no one can doubt. Whatever is done now, in regard of either the University or its Colleges, cannot be easily nor speedily undone. The interests of higher education in Ireland for many a long day are, from every possible point of view, bound up with what is to be done, and perhaps still more with what may be left undone. The seeming apathy which prevails is consequently a matter for deep regret.

What it occurs to me to say at present cannot, I think, be better introduced than by a quotation from a speech made by the President of the Cork Queen's College, at a meeting in Cork, on the 25th ult:—

> He would ask their attention to two or three points in connection with this Bill. . . . First of all he would point out three very important things which it gave them. . . . . It gave them for the first time . . . a representative Governing Body in touch with the district. . . . In the next place, after prolonged negotiations, the Bill provided that all Cork students would be examined in Cork by their teachers, in conjunction with extern examiners provided by the University. That was to say, that in place of the old and long-condemned system . . . they should have a system . . . of examining a student by the man who taught him, and with the correction, which was necessary, of an extern examiner to ensure that there was no kind of bias or partiality. Finally . . . it gave them in as great a measure as could be expected some control over the subjects which they were going to teach in the College. It enabled them to draw up schemes of education, which schemes must receive the ratification of the University Senate. . . . A College that was married to another College could not be as free as it would be if it were a College free to stand upon its own legs. For example, they were tied up as to the subjects they were to teach, as to the professors, as to the assistance they were to employ, as to the amount of money they were to be paid, and as to the fees they were to charge their students. All these beings were to be decided by statutes drawn up by an extern body who were called the Commissioners. . . . That Commission was the kernel of the whole Bill, and upon the action of the Commissioners depended the success or failure of the whole of this University system of legislation. Of these Commissioners, three were to be appointed by the Crown, and four by the Senate of the New University. . . . It was not the first occasion when a Commission of this kind had been appointed. In London University the Commissioners were all Crown nominees, but whether that was not a better solution than one which left the selection to a body composed of different interests was not for him to say at the present moment. At any rate, the Commissioners were the persons who would determine what they were to do in a number of important directions,

and therefore it was essential that they should have a proper representation on that body of Commissioners. What would happen? If the Commissioners behaved as reasonable beings they would come down to Cork, receive certain evidence, receive a scheme drawn up by the Governing Body for the management of the College. They would say, "Well, all right, you are the people who ought to know what is wanted in Cork; there is nothing outrageous in this scheme of yours; we will accept it." That was, he took it, what they would do; but, of course, it was perfectly possible that they might do quite reverse.

A federal University is at the present day looked upon with almost as much disfavour as a merely examining University. A federal University, it is true, educates its undergraduates, whereas a mere examining University does not; but both types of University are open to the objection that the examinations are conducted, at all events partly conducted, by outside examiners; and this imposes upon professors and lecturers the obligation of teaching their subjects, not as they believe they ought to be taught, but as the examiners are assumed to expect them to be taught. This is inevitable in an examining University; in federal Universities, though not inevitable, it appears to have hitherto been the practice.

It has often been urged, in recent times, that the greatest drawback of federal Universities could very easily be removed. Give the constituent Colleges autonomy, to the fullest extent that federation will permit, and you will have solved the problem. What does this mean? It means (1) that the Colleges should be free to select their own courses, but, to secure adequacy and substantial uniformity of courses, that the approval of the University should be required; (2) that the undergraduates should, in all cases, be examined by their teachers, an extern examiner, or extern examiners, being present, without whose concurrence no candidate should be held to have passed the examination; this to ensure uniformity and sufficiency of standard.

Are the constituent Colleges to have autonomy, in the sense explained, according to Mr. Birrell's proposals? Apparently Mr. Windle thinks so; but the test of the charter justifies misgivings on that head. What says the Charter (Art. XIX.)?—

> Provision shall be made for the appointment of at least one external and independent examiner, who shall not be a professor, lecturer, or other teacher in the University or in any constituent College, in each subject or group of subjects studied by candidates for the Degrees of the University. Provision shall be made that the external examiners shall conduct all examinations for the Degrees of the University, not including examinations for Matriculation; and also for enabling University professors and lecturers to be associated with the external examiners in any examinations held by them.

Here it is plainly conveyed, not that the teacher should examine the candidate and allow him to pass, subject to the veto of the extern examiner or examiners, but that the extern examiner should "conduct the examination." The teacher is

merely to assist. The man who really counts, who is to superintend the work of examination, who is to do it in the main and be responsible for it, is the outsider, not the teacher. If this be not so, the drafting of the Charter is phenomenally clumsy and unfortunate.

Mr. Windle claims that "all Cork students would be examined in Cork by their teachers, in conjunction with extern examiners provided by the University." Does the Charter bear out that statement? Here is the clause upon which he must be relying (Art. XIX.) :—

> Provision shall be made for conducting the examinations for any Degree separately for each constituent College if the College so demands and in that case for the appointment from amongst the professors and lecturers of the College of examiners to be associated with the external examiners.

Here, as in the preceding case, the teachers are to be associated with the external examiners, not the external examiners with the teachers; and here also, as nothing is said to the contrary, the extern examiners will doubtless conduct the examinations, assisted by the teachers. There cannot be one rule for examinations held in Constituent Colleges and a different rule for precisely similar examinations held by the University in its own buildings or elsewhere. There seems, therefore, very little justification for the claim that undergraduates will be examined by their teachers, if the words of the Charter are to be accepted at their face value; and consequently it does not seem that, in one particular respect, the so-called autonomy to be awarded to the Colleges will amount to very much. Who is to predominate at the examinations, requires to be made clear. Is it the teacher or the external examiner? Let us clearly understand who is actually to examine the candidates, and whether the extern examiner is to have any power except the power of veto on the passing of the candidate. If he is to have any power other than this, then, in the most important respect of all, the autonomy granted to the Colleges will be a sham.

The amount of freedom to be allowed to the Constituent Colleges in the choice of subjects and courses is also a matter of much importance. Can they select their own subjects, and can they consult the needs of the undergraduates and keep an eye upon the special requirements of the locality, in making their selection? They cannot do so absolutely; the federal plan renders it impossible. This Mr. Windle recognises. But he seems to be satisfied that they will have as much freedom, from the present point of view, as the federal principle will allow. He is not absolutely certain; but he hopes so. He recognises that his hopes may possibly be dashed; for he recognises, as must everybody who has considered the matter, that the Statutory Commission can, and may, prove to be an utter nuisance.

The Constituent Colleges must, therefore, be prepared to have their freedom restricted in many ways. Their freedom will be restricted by the Act and its Schedules, and by the Charter; this cannot be helped. Their freedom will be restricted by the control of the Senate and by the enactments of its Statutes and Regulations; this also is unavoidable. In practice it may not constitute a very great grievance; for the Senate may at any time forego its opposition and change its legislation, for cause shown. But behind the Senate there is the body called the Statutory Commission—an external body, of a merely transitory character, armed with enormous power, which may impose upon the University and the Constituent Colleges alike an intolerable incubus of manifold character, and for a very long time. The extract given from Mr. Windle's speech explains how it is to be constituted. Amongst its powers are the organisation of the University, and the framing of its General Statutes. The Charter lays down (Art. XVIII.) that the Statutes shall determine the subjects and general conditions required for the Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates of the University. Not only, therefore, will the Constituent Colleges not be free in the selection of their subjects, but even the Senate will not be free. By the Statutory Commission the subjects will, in advance, have been foisted upon them both; and, when the Commission comes to be dissolved, apparently there will be no power in the University to undo anything it will have done, no matter how absurd or inconvenient, without further legislation, or the appointment of a future Commission armed with similar powers.

The Statutory Commission is obviously of the greatest importance. What Mr. Windle says of it and of its powers is in no wise too strong. Its constitution is bound to lead to every species of wire-pulling and caballing. There will be something like a stand-up fight between the Colleges for membership of it; and, when the Senate elects its representatives, there will still be a scramble for the Crown nominations, perhaps a regular quarrel. All this will be bad for education It will be ruinous to all the national interests which are at stake. You cannot have as the outcome a Commission favourable to national interests in education; for all the professions and all the Constituent Colleges will want to be represented; so will all religions and all interests. After having organised a University which will have the trail of compromise, of vaccilation, of flabbiness all over it, the Commission will pass into the shadows and Ireland, unless there is a very special Providence watching over her at present, will be provided with two brand new Universities, to which, from any point of view whatever, the last epithet anyone would dream of applying is NATIONAL.

The moral of what is here written ought not to be lost upon Irish-Irelanders, those of them more particularly for whom recently it has been emphasised more than once in the columns of the *Leader*.

THE UNIVERSITIES BILL.

THE STATUTORY COMMISSIONS AND THE UNIVERSITY STATUTES.*

By Ex Opere Operato.

In discussing the range and limitations of the powers of the Statutory Commissions to be appointed under the Universities Bill, the Charters have been too exclusively relied upon. That the Bill itself should not be lost sight of in this connection, seems to have been almost altogether forgotten. The Bill and the Charters cannot fail to throw light upon one another; and any conclusions that can have the promise of stability, must be based not upon an examination of one or more of the documents, but upon a careful study and comparison of all.

The portions of the Charter of the University to have its seat in Dublin, which deal with the powers of the Statutory Commission in relation to the General Statutes, have been frequently quoted. As throwing light upon them, I should wish to quote from the Universities Bill itself:—

> The statutes for the general government of the new Universities and the constituent colleges of the new University having its seat in Dublin shall be made in the first instance as respects the statutes of the new University having its seat at Dublin and the constituent colleges thereof by the Dublin Commissioners appointed under this Act, and as respects the new University having its seat in Belfast by the Belfast Commissioners appointed under this Act, and, after the powers of these Commissioners determine, by the governing bodies of the Universities and Colleges. (Univ. Bill, 4, 1).

In reference to the Statutory Commissions, therefore, the Bill is, in some important respects, much clearer and more explicit than the Charters.

From a comparison of the Bill and Charters, we are justified in concluding that (1) for a period of five years, at least, all legislative and executive power will be practically vested in the Statutory Commissions; (2) that when the Statutory Commissions shall have ceased to exist, all their powers will pass to the Senates in case of the Universities, and to the Governing Bodies (subject to the approval of the Senate) in case of the Constituent Colleges of the University having its seat at Dublin; (3) that during their existence the power of framing Statutes will be vested in the Statutory Commissions, but that subsequently this power, like all other powers, will pass to the respective Senates and Governing Bodies. All this the Bill seems to make quite clear, although the Charters do not.

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* *The Leader*, May 23, 1908.

One point, however, is not perfectly clear. When the powers of the Statutory Commissions fully lapse to the Governing Bodies of the Universities and Constituent Colleges, will the duty necessarily devolve upon those latter bodies of framing new codes of Statutes, or will their power be merely that of annulling, modifying, or supplementing the existing Statutes? To some this may seem to be a point of little or no importance, but such is, by no means, the case. If the original Statutes are to remain in force until recalled or changed, it should not be forgotten that no Statute can, in that event, be recalled, except by an annulling Statute; nor can any Statute be changed or modified except by the framing of a new Statute providing therefor. If the original Statutes are to remain in force but for five years, new Statutes must necessarily be framed at the end of that period; but if the original Statutes are to be permanently enacted, subject to the competence of the permanent legislative authorities to cancel or change them as a whole or in detail, in that case the path of the future reformer may not be, by any means, a primrose path.

The following clauses of the Universities Bill (5; 1, 2) are important in this connection:—

> When any Statute has been made under this Act, a notice of its having been made, and of the place where copies can be obtained, shall be published in the *Dublin Gazette*, and the Statute shall be laid as soon as may be before both Houses of Parliament.
>
> If either House of Parliament within forty days (exclusive of any period of prorogation) after a statute has been laid before it presents an address, praying His Majesty to withhold his assent from the statute or any part thereof, no further proceedings shall be taken on the statute to which the address relates; but this provision shall be without prejudice to the making of a new statute.

The practical importance of these enactments is not far to seek. When the Senate, let us say, of the University, having its seat in Dublin, becomes elective, if it finds itself obliged to frame a new code of Statutes, it will have a perfectly free hand. But, if it finds itself made subject to an existing code, it will, even though armed with the power to change it, be, by no means, in a like position. It will have the power to legislate, no doubt, but it need not do so. New legislation can only be initiated after a trial of strength in the Senate between those who desire change, and those who are averse thereto; meanwhile, the old Statutes are in possession, and must be enforced Then, even if new Statutes are made, they will have to be submitted to Parliament, where it will be possible to obstruct them almost indefinitely, the existence of the old Statutes making it particularly easy to do so. If there were no existing Statutes, obstruction should have some limits; where there are existing Statutes under which work can muddle along somehow, obstruction may practically be carried to any extent.

What has been written modifies somewhat, although not to any very serious extent, the outlook for Irish Ireland. Let me sum up the situation as it presents itself to me.

1. The point of prime and urgent importance is to press with all vigour and expedition for the recognition from the outset of the just claims of the National language. These claims have already been made quite clear in these columns.

2. The *personnel* of the Senate is practically of no importance. That body consists exclusively of Crown nominees It is extremely unsatisfactory. It is now all but impossible to effect any change in it, whilst any considerable change is not to be thought of. It will endure for five years ; and, during that time, therefore, the Senate need not trouble the dreams of Irish Ireland. What should trouble them is what the original Statutes will enact in reference to the National language.

3. In five years from the launching of the University, the Senate will, for the most part, be elected. Then, indeed, it may acquire the utmost importance. If, having fought its best to wrest from the Statutory Commission adequate recognition from the first of the claims of the National language, Irish Ireland should be worsted, as it well may, what is then to be done? It is to be hoped that the Gaelic League, and those who represent it in the University, will be prepared to take the only course consonant with dignity and self-respect. But that will not be enough. It is a great advantage that, even though there will be difficulties to face, the fight can be renewed at the end of five years, and under more hopeful conditions. We shall then have to deal, not with a Statutory Commission appointed by the Crown, but with a Senate mainly elective. Every seat on that Senate that can be contested must be contested by Irish Ireland on the simple issue of justice for the National language.

The time when such issues can arise is, however, remote ; and they may never arise at all. It is to be hoped that patriotism and wisdom will be allowed to prevail, and that the University will be spared the turmoil of a struggle such as that to which such issues, if they had to be raised, should needs give rise. That rests with others rather than with the Gaelic League. What is of immediate and of the highest importance is to bring home, to all whom it may concern, what the demand of Irish Ireland is, and that the graceful concession of that demand is an absolutely essential condition for the future peace and tranquillity of the University.

THE UNIVERSITY QUESTION.

THE FUTURE OF THE EXTERN STUDENT AND KINDRED TOPICS.*

By Chiaroscuro.

The discussions which took place at the recent meeting of Convocation of the Royal University, I have just read. Whilst the impressions they have made upon me are still fresh, I should like to put briefly on record the opinions I entertain about some of the more important subjects discussed, glancing, at the same time, at some of the views which were aired on the occasion. Before passing on, however, it may not be amiss to say that I found some of the discussions depressing in the last degree. This was true, in particular, of the discussion that arose on the resolution proposed in respect of extern students. The position taken up in that resolution, and in the speeches made in support of it, tends to make one despair of the republic, all the more because an attempt—not the less mischievous because unquestionably well-intentioned—is being made to secure for it the approval of the Corporation of the City.

By what specious arguments soever it may be sought to gain acceptance for it, the proposal to continue to grant degrees to externs on mere examination tests is reactionary, and the agitation sought to be promoted in its behalf will, if successful, be undoubtedly mischievous from an educational standpoint. One cannot but deeply regret to see Dr. MacWalter countenance this proposal; whilst Dr. Delany's support of it must strike all who have the best interests of higher education at heart with utter dismay.† It is most fervently to be hoped that all who can in any way influence the decision to be taken on this head will set themselves like flint against so objectionable and retrogade a proposal.

A University degree ought to connote and guarantee a University education. In so far as it does not, it is an imposture. It is idle to plead that Trinity College gives degrees to extern students; so much the worse for Trinity College, and it may well be hoped that the pending reforms therein will secure, amongst other things, the disappearance of the extern student—at all events, on the existing scale, and subject to the conditions at present prevailing. It is also urged, as an argument for the perpetuation of the extern student amongst us, that his existence is recognised, and his requirements catered for, by the University of

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* The Leader, May 23, 1908.

† Nobody would now wonder at anything Dr. MacWalter could do or say, nor is Dr. Delaney any longer the force he was.

London. In this the London University is not to be commended; nor should its example be here imitated, even though here, as there, a distinction should be made between the ordinary Degree and the extern Degree. With a possible reservation, which I shall explain in a moment, the extern student should wholly disappear as soon as the last batch of those who matriculate before the dissolution of the Royal University, shall have been afforded ample time to graduate. This course is best in the real and abiding interests of education, whatever hardships it may seem for the moment to entail.

The whole source of our trouble is to be found in the existence for so many years past of the extern student. If he did not exist, no one would now suggest that he should be created. He does not exist in Scotland, which has, perhaps, the most democratic University system to be found. He is unknown in Germany, whose University system has long been regarded as the most highly developed on earth. He seems to exist nowhere except in the London University, and in Trinity College; and the sooner these institutions shed him altogether, or reduce him to the narrowest possible dimensions, the better for themselves, and the better for education.

What I suggest is that no one be allowed to become an Undergraduate or a Graduate of either of the new Universities as an extern student, unless one who is already engaged in some profession or business or calling on which his livelihood depends: as for example, the teacher, or anyone in a similar position. Such a one would, in most cases, probably, be of more or less mature years. He would be likely to have already received a fairly good secondary education, and the training which it would imply. If he were talented and industrious, and had a laudable ambition to improve his education, it would seem desirable to afford him some stimulus to systematic study. Because of his special circumstances, he could not possibly proceed to a Degree in the ordinary way. It might be well to enable such a one to obtain a Degree, but only an extern Degree, by examination. But to such a one should the privileges be rigidly confined. The Universities might, therefore, be empowered to cater for him for, say, ten years from their foundation. After the end of that period, if the arrangement should have been availed of, and were found to be a success within its own narrow range, and if it should lead to no abuse or danger of abuse, it might be continued. If not, the Universities should be free to discontinue it for ever. It is to be hoped that matters will ultimately develope in a similar direction in Trinity College, and in the University of London.

No one who is still a student, whose education is still in progress, should be allowed to proceed to a Degree, except as a resident student of one of the Constituent Colleges, or of an affiliated College; and of these latter Colleges, I earnestly hope there will

be very few, if any. There should be an end to the farce of playing at University education in grinding Academies and obscure Intermediate schools. Indeed, if such places are allowed to continue to prepare students for Degrees, or for any of the examinations (subsequent to Matriculation) leading to Degrees, there will be imminent danger of imperilling the success, if not the very existence, of the new Universities. If every educational institution in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Galway, Derry, Waterford, Limerick, and a score of other places, be allowed to prepare and present students for Degrees in Arts, the Arts' Lecture Halls of the various University Colleges will be largely deserted. Why not? Why should a student go from Waterford or Limerick to Dublin or Cork, if he may become a Graduate in Arts without faring forth from his native place? If a student can graduate from Ballina or Letterkenny, is he likely to be at the expense of making a long sojourn in Galway or Belfast? I propose these questions, in all seriousness, to all who favour the wholesale maintenance of the present privileges of the extern student.

But, what about the poor man's son? Why should we not have a democratic University? We are weary of these, and such like, questions. Surely we are not justified, in the interests of anybody's son, in dooming the new Universities to failure, not merely from their birth, but before they are yet born. The poor man's son must be provided for; but if he is to be provided for it is essential that he, of all others, should have a University education. You will not provide for him merely by examining him. There is a lot of confused thinking about this whole question. There is one way, and one way only, of providing for the gifted son of the poor man, and that is by means of Scholarships or Bursaries, which will enable him to reside in or near some of the Colleges of the Universities, attend lectures, and proceed to a Degree in the ordinary way. Any other way of assisting him is useless. Those who are really interested in helping the poor man's son, and in making the University democratic, had better devote themselves, if they would really advance the objects they have in view, to urging the establishment of Scholarships and Bursaries. Their activities will then be salutary; at present they are merely pernicious. Can the Government be made to vote money enough for Scholarships or Bursaries; can the Local Bodies, or wealthy individuals, be prevailed upon to assist in that direction? These are the questions of real importance. The question of the poor man's son must be solved in Ireland, as it has been solved in Scotland, by small Fees, cheap living, and Scholarships; to endeavour to solve it on any other lines is futile.

We shall have four University centres in Ireland, perhaps five; and, with such facilities, reinforced by Bursaries or Scholarships for talented youth of insufficient means, it ought to be possible, as it has been found in Scotland, and as it was found even before the receipt of the Carnegie millions, to put University education

within the reach of everybody who needs it, or whom it would benefit. But, whatever happens, let there be an end to the pretence of University education where the thing does not exist.

One result of the University settlement will, I hope, be that teachers of primary schools will be made to spend three years in training instead of two; and one of those years they will, I trust, be required to spend at the University. Their training is at present not only too short, but too narrow. A course in the history and psychology of education should be obligatory for every teacher. And I hope, in consequence, to see a professorship of education established from the first in every University College in the country. What year should be spent in the University I do not undertake to decide; whether the first year of the three, or the last. But waiving that point, I regard the reform which I have urged as absolutely necessary.

Some of the speakers who took part in the discussion at the meeting of Convocation spoke of the women students, as if they, in some way, would suffer particularly by the abolition of the extern student. What they can have meant I cannot imagine. The University and its constituent Colleges are, by the Charters, open to men and women on a like footing. Is it contended that women should get Degrees without real University teaching, even though men should not?

To pass to another point; I fully agree that the number of members of the two Senates to be elected by Convocation is much too small. In my view, the Senates should have no power to co-opt members, or, at most, only two or three: whilst Convocation should be empowered to elect twelve members, or, at the very least, nine or ten. It should not be in the power of a majority of the Senate to add to itself inordinately; and, as the Charter stands, it will certainly have that power.

As to the discussion about the proportion of Catholics and Protestants on the Senates and Governing Bodies of the proposed Universities and their Colleges, I need say nothing; nor need I say anything as to the claims of the National language. With the views on both subjects already put forward in the LEADER, I am in complete agreement.

THE UNIVERSITIES BILL AND THE FUTURE OF CLERICAL EDUCATION IN IRELAND.*

BY SCOTUS.

We were seven. One of the party was a Professor, whilst two there were who, as pastors, had long borne the burden of the day and the heat. With one exception, all were ecclesiastics.

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* *The Leader*, June 6, 1908.

In the decrees of fate it had, I suppose, been written that we were to spend that evening together. So, at all events, it fell out. In the course of the evening a variety of topics was discussed. During a threatened lull in the conversation somebody happened to mention the Universities Bill. For some time thereafter the talk waxed warm and eloquent on that subject, and few indeed were the features of the measure that did not receive more or less attention. From the Universities Bill the conversation drifted not unnaturally to the University question generally. Under what aspect was that venerable topic not discussed? Indeed, some opinions were volunteered, not intended, I fear, for babes and sucklings. Few there are, I expect, who, greatly daring, would be prepared to proclaim some of them from the housetops.

When already the evening was far advanced, somebody contrived to give the conversation a new and quite unlooked-for turn. From that moment, till came the parting, the whole question of clerical education, past, present and future, monopolised our attention. To me this portion of the evening's talk was of absorbing interest. The opinions advanced I have many a time since mentally reviewed. The arguments for and against every such opinion have I often and often weighed in the balance of my own judgment. How often have I reflected on the conclusions about which, before the discussion closed, there seemed to be practical unanimity. Not once, but many a time, has it since occurred to me that I might be doing something not wholly useless, were I to attempt a *précis* of the conclusions referred to. All the details of the evening's talk I could not reproduce, and would not, if I could. But, perhaps, I should be able to set down, exactly as if recording my own views, what seemed, prior to the party's dispersal, to have been its generally accepted conclusions.

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Even a summary of the history of clerical education is not to be attempted here. It must suffice to say that when the Church produced many of its greatest saints, and perhaps most of its greatest luminaries, the University was almost the sole medium of clerical education. To the Universities are we indebted for Albertus Magnus and Aquinas and Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, and others too numerous to mention, who represent the finest flowering of Catholic intellect, erudition and sanctity. The religious upheaval came. The atmosphere of the Universities was believed to have grown dangerous. The Council of Trent sat and decreed that diocesan seminaries should, as far as possible, be everywhere provided. A careful study of the Decrees of the Council, in which the subject is either referred to or fully dealt with, would appear to show that the Council scarcely contemplated the imperative and wholesale withdrawal of young ecclesiastics from the Universities, Indeed, we are forced to believe that it contemplated the continued attendance of at least some of the

students at University lectures, with the consent of their Ordinaries. It is, therefore, doubtful, to say the least, if in the mind of the Council, the seminary system was by any means designed to attain the absolute and exclusive vogue which, as a matter of fact, it did in later times attain.

However that may be, there is no doubt whatever that thenceforward, down even to our own day, the diocesan seminary became the ideal which was universally aimed at. In ever-increasing numbers, ecclesiastics and ecclesiastical students withdrew or were withdrawn from the Universities, until at last there came a time when, outside of Germany, these venerable seats of learning practically knew them no longer. The change was undoubtedly bad for the Universities; and who, without misgiving and much searching of heart, will now be prepared to say that, at all events as actually carried out, it has been for the unqualified advantage of religion or of clerical education?

That the situation with which the Church found itself confronted about the period of the Council of Trent was one of more than ordinary difficulty no one can doubt. The Fathers of the Council doubtless understood the circumstances and perils of the time better and more clearly than we can at this distant date. But making all possible allowance for this, it is hard for one glancing back over the years that have intervened, and calmly surveying all the circumstances, to feel at all confident that the course adopted was in all respects the wisest one, or that the policy then inaugurated, though necessary perhaps for the time being, was that which promised the greatest or most enduring advantage to religion and the Church. That it had many immediate advantages, and that it may for a time have been even necessary, may be conceded. But the policy which is best adapted to a period of abnormal turbulence and unsettlement is, to say the least, very unlikely to be equally well adapted to times when normal conditions have begun again to prevail.

Be this as it may, many of the wisest, most learned and most prominent ecclesiastics one meets, seem to lean strongly to the view that when the Church left the Universities a mistake was made. At all events, they strongly hold that it was a grievous mistake to make the abandonment of the Universities a matter of settled and abiding policy. Such a policy meant permanently abandoning the chief citadels of learning to the forces of religious, social and intellectual anarchy; and beyond all doubt it necessarily meant educational deterioration.

What, it may be said, could the Church have done? To answer that question is by no means easy. But, before deciding to set up a vast system of seminaries, many of them necessarily very small, one would have liked to have seen a thoroughgoing attempt made to provide adequately for ecclesiastical discipline by the erection, in the vicinity of the Universities, of Halls, or Houses of Residence, in which all clerical students, whether belonging

to the religious orders or not, should be obliged to reside. Certain it is that something needed to be done. It seems a great pity that something on these latter lines should not have been afforded a trial before the more drastic remedy, in many respects so retrogade and objectionable, was resorted to.

The seminary system in course of time became a fetish. If it were at all possible, every bishop regarded himself as bound to provide his diocese with a theological seminary. Even if there was no chance of making it efficient, it seems to have mattered little. Had not the Council of Trent said it was the proper thing? That doubtless was hundreds of years ago, and vast changes had in the meantime been wrought. Even so, the diocese should have a seminary, not, be it remembered, *a petit seminaire*, but a seminary, in which, under the episcopal eye, the ecclesiastic should receive his professional as well as his higher general education. Not the least of the services which Pius X. has rendered the Church is that of exploding the sacrosanctity of the seminary theory. He has decreed the wholesale amalgamation of the Italian seminaries. Where diocesan seminaries are large enough to make genuine education possible, he has allowed them to remain. In all other cases, he has caused them to be closed, and their places to be taken by provincial colleges, or by seminaries designed to supply the needs of groups of dioceses. This is a great advance. We shall never again see discussion of the advantage or the reverse of the diocesan seminary system peremptorily closured by the simple expedient of appealing to the legislation of the Council of Trent. Pius X. recognises that the world is older by centuries than it was when the Council was held. His action has made it clear that at present one may not be an out-and-out partisan of the seminary system and yet not be of doubtful orthodoxy.

By an accident, or a miracle perhaps, or by some special providence, we escaped in this country anything like a general development of the seminary system, greatly, as it would seem, to our advantage. From the period of the Council of Trent till near the close of the eighteenth century, the growth of the seminary system was impossible amongst us owing to the operation of the Penal Laws. During all that time our clergy had perforce to go abroad for their education. When better days began at length to dawn, and revolution began to play havoc with most of the colleges over sea that had catered for the needs of the Irish Mission, the question of organising a system of clerical education at home at once became urgent. In a few dioceses theological seminaries were established on, of course, a very modest scale. We certainly do not owe the Government very much; but we are, at all events, indebted to it for having interposed soon enough to prevent the seminary system from spreading all over the country.

For a time counsels seem to have been divided: into these divisions it is needless to enter. It was ultimately decided to found a single ecclesiastical college for the entire country. Of

that college much could be said from other points of view, but this is not the place to say it. From the establishment of Maynooth, the vast majority of the priests of Ireland have been educated within its walls. The theological seminaries that preceded it still survive; and a few others have been added. Little by little, preparatory diocesan schools or *petits seminaires* have also been everywhere provided for the secondary education of ecclesiastics. The local theological seminaries have educated, and continue to educate, a small fraction of the students destined for the mission in Ireland; furthermore, some candidates for the ministery, though not a very great number, have continued to go abroad for their education. That higher clerical education, including the strictly professional part thereof, has been more efficient for having been, for the most part, concentrated in a single college, few will now doubt. It has, by that means, been found possible to keep the education of the clergy fairly abreast of the changing and growing needs of each succeeding generation The time seems to have now arrived for a further step forward. Whether that step will be taken or not, is a question of immense and far-reaching importance.

For such a forward movement we happen, by rare good fortune, to be most happily circumstanced. Those who are preparing to be the future priests of Ireland are not scattered all over the country in small seminaries. In a single college are they all practically banded together. For purposes of progress this simplifies the situation enormously.

Purely professional education is in all cases a thing apart: it is mainly a matter for those who belong to the professions. Here, therefore, the professional education of the clergy will not be discussed. But their general education, particularly their higher general education, is a matter of wider interest. It will be generally admitted, and probably desired that, if not ahead of the numbers of other professions in this respect, the clergy ought certainly not to lag behind.

We seem to have reached the parting of the ways. It is not unlikely that a new era is about to open for Catholic higher education. Catholics entering the professions will in future enjoy opportunities that they have not hitherto had, and the same is true of young Catholics of the upper and upper-middle classes generally. Is the higher general education of the Catholic clergy to keep pace with this general advance, or is it not? There are many things which suggest that the reply should unhesitatingly be in the affirmative. The circumstances are exceptionally favourable, and the best interests of religion, of clerical education, and of the University itself would seem alike to demand it. It is hard to imagine anything which those who earnestly desire the country's highest weal should yearn and pray for more earnestly.

What then should be done? The worst thing that could possibly happen would, of course, be that Maynooth should drop out

of the University system altogether. That, fortunately, is scarcely possible. When a mistake of that kind has occurred once, it has occured too often, and its repetition need scarcely be apprehended.

Three possible courses remain. The students might go to the University for their higher general education; or Maynooth might be made a Constituent College of the University; or it might be made a merely Affiliated College. The first-named course would, in every way, be by far the most satisfactory; indeed, the only really satisfactory course to adopt.

It is certainly not free from difficulty. But the difficulties are mainly financial, and are not nearly so serious as they might be. No one will be disposed to underrate them; but, at the same time, circumstances have reduced them almost to a minimum. Maynooth should have a House of Residence for its Arts Students in the vicinity of the University; there the students should reside, attending lectures at the University, until they should have graduated. The one difficulty in the way is, as has been said, purely financial. Ecclesiastical students must, of course, live under discipline; but discipline can be enforced in Dublin as easily as in Maynooth and Rome. There is no reason to suppose that discipline is more lax in Clonliffe or in All Hallowes than it is in Maynooth. As for having to go outside the College for lectures, why the students of almost every college in Rome have to do so. The Irish College, the Scotch College, the Canadian College, the Polish College, and others, are practically mere Houses of Residence. Nearly every college in Rome sends its students to the Gregorian University, or to the Propaganda, or to the Minerva or to the Apollinare for their lectures. The stranger who loiters about the Piazza di Sant' Ignazio of an afternoon must often be surprised to see one of the neighbouring streets suddenly thronged with youths arrayed in cassock, soprano, and broad-brimmed hat. For a few minutes there is bustle and animated conversation. Then you see a party of perhaps twenty file off, two and two, in one direction, led by their Decano Their cassocks are tipped with green: they are from the Polish College. In another direction a party, whose cassocks are tipped with blue, are seen marching off in similar order; they are on their way to the Spanish College; and so with the vast concourse until, in five minutes time, the street is again almost deserted. What is the explanation of the momentary bustle? All these young men have been at lecture in the Gregorian University close by, and now they are hieing back to their respective colleges. In the lecture halls daily assemble the representatives of ever so many nationalities; and this is all to the good, if, putting the mere acquisition of knowledge aside, we look to the wider and perhaps deeper aspects of education. Surely what goes on in the Eternal City, under the eye of the Supreme Pontiff and his advisers, should be equally feasible in Dublin.

At the University the students would, during their Arts course, have advantages which they can scarcely ever have in a seminary, opportunities of attending lectures in a great variety of subjects which are every day growing in importance, such, for example as Economics. But really the advantages need not be emphasised for those who have had any considerable educational experience. We need industrial reform. For many a day to come it is likely that the clergy will, for the sake of their flocks, have to take a considerable part therein. The University is just the place to equip them for the work.

What will happen is not easy to foretell. Should Maynooth be made an Affiliated College of the University, it may safely be prophesied that such an arrangement will not last. The inconvenience of having the students examined by outsiders will, as time passes, make itself felt more and more. It will be found particularly galling in the case of Honours Students. After the lapse of some years, they will probably be sent to the University. When they have been withdrawn, it will soon be discovered that those who remain behind will suffer a great deal educationally by their absence. And so a time will probably come when they also will be sent to the University.

. . . . . .

My task is ended. Should those who were of the party by which these matters were discussed happen to read what here is written, I hope they will at least award me such credit as is the veracious chronicler's meed.

POLAND AND IRELAND.

A FOOTNOTE ON MAYNOOTH AND IRISH-IRELAND.*

By Chrysologus.

Some time ago there appeared in Sinn Fein an English translation of a portion of Dr. Zimmer's now famous pamphlet on the Language War in Prussian Poland. Dr. Zimmer has sought to put the authorities of the Catholic Church in Poland completely in the wrong, and incidentally to justify the German Government in their anti-Polish Crusade, by a careful review of the history and fortunes of the Irish language for the past hundred years. He proves up to the hilt, and beyond it, that the Church in Ireland, of its own free will and volition, without pressure of any kind from any quarter, acquiesced in the decay of the national language; accepted without a murmur or a whisper of protest, its formal exclusion from the primary education of the country; all

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* Sinn Féin, April 11, 1908.

but universally discountenanced its use in the Catholic pulpits of the land, and in the vernacular portions of the public worship, as soon as it became possible to do so in any given case, and to the full extent to which it had become possible; failed during practically the entire century, even when Irish was virtually the vernacular of the whole population, to make any real or adequate provision in the local seminaries, or even in Maynooth, for training priests to minister to the people in Irish; and that, therefore, it was formerly not uncommon, and is even now not impossible, to find priests ignorant of Irish living amongst and ministering to flocks, most of whom, if not all, are ignorant of English.

Such, in brief outline, is Dr. Zimmer's indictment of the Catholic Church in Ireland from the point of view of the national language. It matters not why he has formulated that indictment. What really does matter is that in all essentials he has proved his thesis to the hilt. In regard to occasional, trivial, or wholly unimportant details, a point could of course be now and again easily scored against him. But what of that? It is scarcely possible that a foreigner, no matter how painstaking he may be, or how desirous soever of attaining to absolute accuracy, could hope to be quite accurate in every small detail.

The Professor has fully established his main position; and thus he has succeeded in making it appear that in Prussian Poland the ecclesiastical authorities are most unreasonable, perverse, and wrong-headed people. He wants to know why the Catholic Church in Poland will not follow the example of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Catholic Church in Ireland acquiesced in the substitution all along the line of English for Irish—in education, in preaching, in religious instruction; nay, to a very large extent actively aided it. Why, Dr. Zimmer wants to know, will not the Catholic Church in Prussian Poland act in like manner in respect of the Polish language?

In Poland the ecclesiastical authorities, though they have yielded much for the sake of peace, have positively refused to substitute German for Polish—an unknown language for a known, a foreign language for the vernacular—in the religious instruction of the young. At the instance of the late Archbishop of Posen, they have taken their stand upon the legislation of the Council of Trent in this matter; and the Holy See, having been appealed to, has decided in their favour. Dr. Zimmer wants to know what about Ireland; he wants to know whether the legislation of Trent is not as operative in Ireland as in Poland; and if in Ireland it has had no attention paid to it in the past, if even at present there are places where no attention is paid to it, he is curious to know why legislation, which is held to be so sacred and important in Poland, should lie so lightly upon the consciences of Irish ecclesiastics, in the present as well as in the past.

The situation is a curious one. Not a few well-meaning people are throwing up their hands and wanting to know, will no one

answer Zimmer. They are more anxious about Poland than they are about Ireland; and only that Zimmer's historical argument is so embarrassing for the Catholics of Prussian Poland, these good people would be quite at ease. The aborigines of Ring, Arran, and other remote places, give them no concern. Polish children should, of course, have religious instruction given them in the vernacular; so much is quite obvious. So says the Church in Poland; so says the Holy See; so, it seems, long ago said the Council of Trent; so say we all, save the naughty German Government. But Irish children, even when Irish was the all but universal vernacular, even where it is the vernacular at the present moment—why, bless you, that is quite another matter. How can Irish children get religious instruction in Irish? The priests do not know Irish, nor do the teachers. The Training Colleges have too much to do to find time to teach Irish; and the Gaelic League is utterly unreasonable in insisting that they should do so. The students in Maynooth have too much to do trying to make a display in the Royal University. They cannot find time to study Irish; and so Irish is to be no longer an obligatory subject for them. How then can any reasonable human being say that religious instruction can or ought to be given in the vernacular in Ireland? The Bishops cannot help themselves. They can do nothing—absolutely nothing. The Training Colleges can do nothing until they are compelled by the British Government in 1911. Until then the Council of Trent must suspend operations in Ireland, just as it has had to do in the past.

Of course, Zimmer's historical argument has no validity as against the Polish Catholics and the Polish ecclesiastical authorities. But it is beyond all doubt a severe indictment of the official action of the Church in Ireland in regard to the national language—a terrible, a damning indictment; an indictment, however, which Irishmen could have made with even more crushing effect than Dr. Zimmer, if they cared to do so. But they imagined that disgraceful chapter of Irish history was closed, and they wished to leave it closed for ever, until the Bishops by their action at Maynooth chose to open it again, to open it with the fullest knowledge of what they were doing. Having opened it, they must be prepared to hear the truth told, and repeated and driven home, as to their attitude towards the national language in the past. For a time they seemed, though very slowly and reluctantly, to be making a steady approach to the right policy, the policy of the Council of Trent, and the policy befitting them as Irishmen and patriots. But a very, very little thing, the veriest trifle compared with the interests they were so lightly ready to sacrifice, soon made them weary of well-doing, and turned them aside from the path of right and patriotism. It was a bad black day for the national language, and certainly it was not a proud nor a good day for the Irish Church But having by their recent action challenged and provoked inquiry into their policy in regard

to the National language in the past, they need not be surprised if they are reminded of much which they would doubtless wish forgotten. No desire, however ardent, to veil their past can be allowed to prevail when they set themselves, no matter what their motives, to hamper the language movement.

Let the Catholics of Poland pluck up courage. No doubt the Irish precedent is awkward. It seems to be dead against them. The reply is that two wrongs do not make a right. What is wrong in Poland was wrong in Ireland; and it does not follow that because the Church in Ireland adopted a wrong and ineffably foolish policy in reference to the national language, and that because Irish children have been and are denied religious instruction in the vernacular, that it is right so to act in Poland. Neither time nor distance consecrates a wrong.

Let us now turn from Prussian Poland to Russian Poland. If a lesson may be learned from the former, it is doubtful if a still more striking and impressive lesson may not be learned from the latter. We know how the Church in Ireland has acted towards the national language. We know how she still acts. We know the status she assigns to the language in her Seminaries, in the Training Colleges which she controls, even in the great college which educates the bulk of her clergy. Compare her treatment of it with her treatment of the language of the conqueror whose heel is on the country's throat; or rather compare her treatment of it, when it was the language of the whole country, with that meted out to the foreign tongue.

In her colleges and seminaries and other educational institutions, might the Church in Ireland not reasonably be expected to assign the national language a status, if not as prominent as that which she assigns the English, at all events as important as the Church by solemn compact guarantees to the language of the conqueror in Russian Poland? What that status is, the following document, published not long since by the Papal Secretariat of State, will make sufficiently clear:—

"Agreement (*Convention*) between the Holy See and Russia in respect of the teaching of the Russian language and literature in the Seminaries of Poland.

"As to the subject of the study of the Russian language, history, and literature in the Catholic Seminaries of Poland, and of examinations therein, the undersigned having been authorised by their Governments to conclude an Agreement based on the Agreements (*conventions*) of 1882 and of 1887, and the Pro-Memoria forwarded by the Cardinal Secretary of His Holiness, to the Russian Charge d'Affaires, dated 4th August, 1906, have agreed upon the following articles:—

"1. The scheme and programme for the study of the Russian language, history, and literature are to be drawn up (*sont formes*) by the Bishop (to whose control the seminary is subjected), with the assent (*d'accord*) of the Government,

conformably to the character and purpose of the seminaries. The Professors (*maitres*) who teach these branches are also to be appointed (*nommés*) by the Bishop, with the preliminary consent of the Government.

"2. When students pass from one class to another, and when they are departing from the seminaries, examinations in the Russian language, history, and literature are to be held in the seminaries in the presence of the Governor of the district (*Gouverneur local*), or of some person specially delegated by him for this purpose (*a cet effet*) assisted by a representative of the Department School Committee (*de l'arrondisement scolaire*).

"3. The right to issue certificates (*de notes*) to the students is reserved to the professors. The presence of a representative of the State (*du Pouvoir*) and of the education authority (*de l'autorite scolaire*) at the examinations, is intended solely to furnish the Government with a means of obtaining first-hand information as to the advancement and progress made in the teaching of non-theological subjects, and of assisting this teaching with the means at its disposal.

"4. The examinations held on the occasion of promotion from one class to another are to be oral only; the examinations to be held before the students take leave of the seminary (*a l'occasion de la sortie*) are to be oral and written (*verbaux et par ecrit*).

"5. The questions (*les thèmes*) for the written examinations are to be selected by the Bishop in accordance with the course which the students of the seminary shall have followed in the Russian language, history, and literature. They are to be made known (*communiqués*) by the Bishop, who, in the presence of the students of the class about to depart (*de la classe de sortie*), is to select by lot a sealed ticket (*un de billets cachetès*) indicating the question (*le theme*).

"All the provisions of the Agreement of 1892, not having a direct bearing on the teaching of the Russian language, literature, and history in the seminaries of the Kingdom of Poland nor on the examinations to be held in these subjects, remain in force, as also those of the Agreement of 1897.

"Rome, 22nd July, 1907,
"R. Card. Merry del Val,
"Sazanow."

Let me ask all those, whether clergy or laity, who read this document to ponder it in their hearts, above all, let me ask every Irish bishop, who may chance to read it, to ponder it in his heart of hearts. An important status is here assigned and by solemn covenant secured, not to the vernacular of Poland (for that there need be no fear, as the clergy and laity of Poland may be trusted

to look after it), but to the language of the foreign nation that holds Russian Poland in thrall. Is the Church not prepared to do as much in Ireland for Nationality and the National Language as the Church is prepared to do in Poland for a foreign tyrant and a foreign tongue? Unfortunately, no. If for the past hundred years the Church had but given so much consideration to Irish nationality and to the National language, how different the lot of the nation would now be! If in ecclesiastical seminaries and colleges, if above all in Maynooth since its foundation she had provided a *bona fide* examination year by year for ecclesiastical students in the language, history, and literature of Ireland, with an examination of a more exacting character prior to ordination to the priesthood—these examinations to be held in the presence of representatives of some outside body or bodies,—what would be the position of the national language throughout the land to-day? But, alas, alas, the Church, which alone had influence to save the language, the clergy who were until recently the only educated body in the land, failed to raise a finger to save the language, when they did not actively co-operate in killing it. Alas, alas, even now, in the flush of the revival movement, years and years after the birth of the Gaelic League, the very flower of the clergy of Ireland have failed the language at a critical moment. They allowed themselves to be thrown into a panic where wise and patriotic men would without difficulty have kept their heads; they allowed themselves to be led to prefer very trumpery interests to the interest of the Irish nation and her language. But the end is not yet. Let us pray that they be wise enough to retreat from a wrong and degrading position.

MAYNOOTH: THE SEMINARIES AND IRISH,—I *

By Corcagiensis.

In the Leader I have just read an article on the above subject A very curious article, indeed, it is. To decide whether the writer's views are the more erratic, or his facts the more inaccurate, is, by no means, an easy task. He can know nothing about seminary requirements; and, most certainly, he can have no knowledge whatever of Maynooth, from within or from without.

The writer's misstatements and grotesque speculations make it necessary that somebody, who is not ignorant of the facts of the case, and of the affairs of Maynooth and of the seminaries, should

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* *The Leader*, July 4, 1908. In reply to an article contributed to *The Leader* of June 20, 1908, by a writer signing himself "Columcille."

interpose at this point. Neither the authorities at Maynooth nor any other human beings have anything to gain by such a distortion of fact.

Adverting to what the writer aforesaid calls the Maynooth question, and the attitude of Maynooth, he states that the discussion at the Airdfheis had but confirmed what he himself always believed, to wit, that the root of the difficulty lay not in Maynooth, but in the seminaries. No matter what he may think, or what anybody may have said at the Ardfheis or elsewhere, that statement is simply nonsense. Why are people so wedded to make-believe, so willing to delude themselves, or to be deluded, so reluctant to honestly face facts? To endeavour wholly, or in part, to transfer responsibility from Maynooth to the seminaries is futile. In some quarters, indeed, it is worse; it is positively dishonest.

Those who are, in the smallest degree, conversant with the real facts, are, of course, well aware that Maynooth absolutely dominates the whole situation. In some cases the seminaries are partially secondary schools of a general character. But they are, primarily, institutions founded and conducted for the purpose of preparing candidates for Maynooth. This, in all cases their principal function, is, in some cases, practically their only function. The requirements for entrance to Maynooth determine the scope and character of their teaching. No doubt, they are, in the vast majority of cases, Intermediate schools. But this does not materially affect what has been said. In the Intermediate programme almost every possible subject is included; and, of these subjects, the seminaries practically select such subjects as are essential for entrance to Maynooth. Anything that is not required for entrance to Maynooth is either not taught at all, or is, as a rule, taught very indifferently.

What, then, are the subjects required for entrance to Maynooth? Passing over a few purely ecclesiastical or very minor subjects, the necessary subjects for those who begin at the beginning are Greek, Latin, English, Mathematics, and Religious Knowledge. For the past few years Irish has been required, but the requirement is merely nominal. Once upon a time the Gaelic League knew how to be strenuous. Some years ago it respectfully requested the Trustees of Maynooth College to make Irish obligatory for entrance thereto. The request was refused, and the League was lectured. The following year it renewed its request, and was again refused. It went on repeating its request to the Trustees every time they met, until, at length, it was thought that something had better be done to meet the League's wishes.

So it came about that Irish was ultimately made one of the prescribed subjects of the Maynooth entrance programme. The resolution which decreed this reserved to the Bishops individually, the right to dispense their students from the Irish examination. At the same time, however, it was generally understood that the

right to dispense was a merely temporary measure, which, in a short time, would either be abrogated or become obsolete. Since this legislation was enacted, what have the results been? In several dioceses the students have been dispensed wholesale from the Irish examination. In many seminaries Irish is not yet taught, nor has any attempt been made to teach it. Nor is that all, nor the worst. Students who present themselves for entrance to Maynooth without dispensation are indiscriminately admitted, whether they pass in Irish or not. Not only have students who failed in Irish been admitted, but it is a matter of common knowledge that students who had never been taught a word of Irish have been admitted. So that, apart from the wholesale exercise of the right of dispensation Irish is only, on paper, a requirement for admission to Maynooth. This is well, if not universally, known. The seminaries, as a rule, act accordingly—not all of them, however; for some of them make an honest effort to prepare candidates for Maynooth to pass the entrance examination in Irish.

So much then for the attempt to make the seminaries scapegoats. The seminaries could hardly be expected to act otherwise than they have done, unless, indeed, from purely patriotic motives; and there are many of them of whom it is mild criticism to say that patriotism is not their strong point. At all events, Irish, as a subject for entrance to Maynooth, does not count. Bishops can dispense from it. As a matter of fact, they do dispense wholesale. And whether they dispense or not is quite immaterial. Those who fail, no matter how badly, are admitted by the authorities as readily as those who pass.

"Put the seminaries on the right lines, and Maynooth must follow," says the writer in the LEADER. Nonsense! It is Maynooth, and Maynooth alone, that can put the seminaries on the right lines. So far from Maynooth following the seminaries, it is quite the other way. The seminaries do, and must, follow Maynooth. Let Maynooth give effect to the resolution of its Trustees; let the right of dispensing pass into abeyance, and in twelve months you will have Irish not only taught in all the seminaries, but taught as a subject of the first importance. "All roads leads to Rome," and just as truly in the present discussion does one always come back to Maynooth. No matter how far one may fare from it, one is inevitably, relentlessly, driven back to it.

Continues the writer from whom I have quoted:—"It may be contended that, if Irish is not a necessary subject for entrance to Maynooth, the seminaries will not teach it. Why should they not, if Irish will be accepted at Maynooth as one of the subjects for entrance? And, as I understand the matter, Irish, though not compulsory, will be accepted as a qualifying subject for entrance to the College." What delicious nonsense! It is plain that the writer does not understand the rudiments of the question on which he has undertaken to write. He asks a question; let

me ask one in reply. What on earth does he mean by a subject which, though not compulsory for entrance, will be accepted for entrance? Probably he does not know. But, if he had any definite idea before his mind, probably he meant that Irish, though not absolutely compulsory, was one of a number of subjects, from amongst which candidates should select one or more; but that, having made their selection, the subjects so selected became essential for entrance to the College. If he cherished any such notion, it is needful to tell him that it is an utter delusion. Let me ask him yet another question: Apart from patriotic motives, why should seminaries teach, or candidates for Maynooth study, a subject which, though on the programme for entrance, in no way whatever affects the question of the candidate's admission to the College? If the candidate who fails obtains admission as easily and readily as the candidate who passes, where, from the point of view of entrance to Maynooth, is the advantage of teaching or studying Irish in the seminaries? Why, then, should it be on the entrance programme at all? Candidly, I do not know. Perhaps for appearance sake; perhaps to stop Gaelic League clamour for a time by a concession which practically means absolutely nothing; which, to all appearance, was meant from the outset to mean nothing.

It must seem, I fear, a needless, as well as a useless, task to pursue the writer further. "After all," he says, "I have a great deal of sympathy with the attitude of the Maynooth authorities." This sympathy might count for something if there happened to have been any intelligence behind it; but, as matters stand, it is not difficult to appraise it at its value.

"I am not sure that compulsory classes in Maynooth were any great asset to the National Movement." So says the writer. I happen to know something of Maynooth, whilst he, quite plainly, does not. And I know that the compulsory classes were such a valuable asset to the National Movement that they planted good Irish scholars, and not a few of them, in every diocese in Ireland; placed Irish scholars in places where, for generations before, none had been found; introduced to Irish scholarship many a man, now an Irish scholar and a Gaelic League leader, who, but for the much-derided compulsory classes, would not, to-day, it is morally certain, know even the alphabet of the Irish language. Remember that students enter Maynooth at an age when people, with few exceptions, will learn nothing except, more or less, by compulsion; and, if the first years pass without mastering the rudiments of the Irish language, every succeeding year renders it more probable that the task will never be attempted. The awful aversion that there is for compulsion in reference to Irish, and the fierce love of liberty that the question of Irish teaching arouses, might, with advantage, be partially manifested in Maynooth, in the seminaries, and elsewhere, in reference to Greek, Latin, English, Mathematics, Physics, etc.; it would be highly interesting to note the result.

MAYNOOTH: THE SEMINARIES AND IRISH,—II.*

By Corcagiensis.

Reluctant as I was at the outset to be drawn into a discussion on the above subject, I am still more reluctant to continue to take part therein. The blame must rest upon the writer who inaugurated this discussion in the columns of the Leader. The extraordinary parody of facts for which he made himself responsible could not fail to provoke somebody to whom the facts are known to break silence. Had I not intervened, doubtless somebody else would have done so—if only to make it clear that the quarrel between Irish Ireland and Maynooth is not absolutely ridiculous, and that all the parties thereto are not so many nincompoops.

I doubt if Maynooth will feel particularly grateful to its champion; it certainly has no reason to do so. And yet he seems inclined to cling to his views and statements. I cannot spare time for pursuing will-o'-the-wisps; so I must decline hereafter to notice mere misstatements and misconceptions.

We are again told: "Get Irish taught in the seminaries and the students will go to Maynooth with a fair, a working knowledge of the language, and so be able to avail themselves of the opportunities which, I believe, the College affords." The object here outlined is admirable and most earnestly to be desired. On that point there is, as far as I am aware, no difference of opinion. The crucial point is to decide how that most desirable object is to be secured. I think I have made it clear already. As long as Irish is really obligatory neither for entrance to Maynooth, nor during any part of the College course, that object, however desirable, will not be secured, Experience has amply proved that such is unfortunately the case.

The statement, "I am not sure that compulsory classes in Maynooth were any great asset to the National movement," has been transmuted into, "I am positively certain the compulsory classes never did any good worth speaking of." The writer will remember, that what is gratuitously asserted may be gratuitously denied. But I would call his attention to the fact that the present interest in Irish in Maynooth sychronises exactly with the period during which Irish has been compulsory there; those who remember the state of things which prevailed before Irish was made obligatory will be in a position to appreciate the full force of the coincidence. Let me, however, ask a question. As the writer has such pathetic faith in the voluntary principle, is he prepared to extend its application to all other subjects, both for admission to Maynooth, and during the College course?

* The Leader, July 18, 1908. In reply to further articles by "Columcille," as well as a brief article by Rev. P. Forde, S.T.L., C.C., St. Peter's, Athlone.

The statement that "the seminaries practically select such subjects as are essential for Maynooth," has been questioned. Surely everyone in touch with seminaries knows that this is a mere truism. The statement is, however, sought to be controverted by the further statement that French, though not a necessary qualifying subject for Maynooth, is practically taught in all seminaries. I am well aware that French is taught in many seminaries. But how is it taught? Those who have had any personal experience of the French classes in Maynooth will know how to estimate the teaching in the seminaries at its proper value. They will know, also, how to appraise my qualifying statement—which my critic has overlooked—that "subjects which are not essential for entrance to Maynooth are either not taught at all, or are very indifferently taught."

I am asked why the seminaries generally do not teach Irish instead of French, or some other subject? I cannot answer with any confidence. Possibly the answers are as various as the seminaries. In some cases, perhaps, the administration has no sympathy with Irish Ireland ideals. In other cases snobbery or aversion to change will possibly suggest the answer. But be the answer what it may, Maynooth dominates the situation, and it can, whenever it chooses put the seminaries "on the right lines." Nobody wishes, as far as I know, to exempt the seminaries from all blame; the columns of the LEADER, to go no further afield testify that they have had their share of criticism. What is really objected to is that they should be made scapegoats, and that, in the existing quarrel, Maynooth should be allowed to go scot free.

I cannot pursue my critic through all his hair-splittings. They leave all my statements of facts untouched. Where, however, he strives to make a point against my statement that the compulsory classes "have planted good Irish scholars, and not a few of them, in every diocese of Ireland," I would merely ask him to revise his conception of the force of a universal affirmative. The scholars are there, as I know full well, and as a survey of the present local leaders of the Gaelic League will show; and very many of them are not native speakers, and do not belong to Irish-speaking dioceses. They learned their Irish in Maynooth. They laid the foundation of their scholarship in the compulsory classes. And those who have had recent experience of the College will have little doubt that many of them, had not Irish been compulsory, would never have begun its study. They knew nothing of the language on their advent to the College. At first they took no interest in it. But their interest grew with time, and, ultimately, they became enthusiastic; not all, of course, but very many who otherwise would not have been interested at all.

All this, however, is apart from the real question. Is my critic satisfied to have Irish not obligatory for entrance to Maynooth, and to have it merely voluntary during the College course? Is that a proper status for the national language in an educational

institution of such importance? Irish is nominally required for entrance. Should the requirement be merely nominal? Irish during the early years of the College course, was, until recently, obligatory, and had been for many years. To obtain a few distinctions the more in the University, or to diminish the small number of failures slightly—all of which is merely problematical—can this be held to be an adequate reason for degrading the National language, whilst leaving all other obligatory subjects untouched, whether they are required by the University or not?

This is the real point of the quarrel with Maynooth. The National language should be obligatory in Maynooth, as it has been; to assign it a lower status, no matter for what motive, is to degrade it. So also should it be really obligatory for entrance to Maynooth, as it already is nominally. We ask that Irish should be obligatory in the New University, both for entrance and during the early undergraduate years. How then can we allow that its status be lowered in Maynooth?

As to Father Forde's article, a few words must suffice. I am sorry that I am unable to accept his challenge. A layman, and even a priest, may have conclusive reasons for anonymity, even when he is compelled by a sense of duty to join in a public discussion. Besides, the facts which he sets forth may be unquestioned, or they may be of such a character that whosoever chooses can easily satisfy himself of their truth.

The facts which I have set forth, Father Forde can very easily verify, if he chooses to take the necessary trouble. I assure him that they will stand. Every one of them, I have heard frequently stated, in terms which no one could possibly mistake, by several persons intimately connected with Maynooth—stated, too, not in confidence, nor merely to me personally, but without the least reserve and quite publicly. I do not state that they were communicated in order that I or anybody else should make use of them. They were merely stated in general conversation. But most assuredly there was nothing in the manner or circumstances of their statement to preclude anybody who might think well of it from making public use of them. Surely Father Forde is not serious when he says that because I now make the statements in public, those from whom I have heard them are bound to come forward and stand sponsor for them over their names.

Furthermore, I may remind Father Forde that the statements about the entrance examinations, and dispensations from Irish at those examinations, as well as from attendance at Irish lectures within the College, have been already published in the Press; nor have they been denied, because they could not. Further, than this, I regret to say, I cannot go in meeting Father Ford's wishes.

MAYNOOTH AND THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.*

By Pallavicini.

It is satisfactory to find that the question of the status of the National language in Maynooth is again well to the front. That it has for some time past been allowed to glide into the background is to be regretted. Not merely is it a question of great, but even of national interest and importance; and now that the special meeting of the Airdfheis has led to its renewed discussion in the Press, one may hope that it will not be again lost sight of. The more consideration one devotes to it, the more one feels that it has not yet been at all adequately presented to the public.

Hitherto it was thought that the question of the status of Irish in Maynooth had only a single aspect; but the discussion in its more recent stages goes to show that such is not the case. We now find that it has a two-fold aspect. We have, it would appear, not merely to take account of the status of Irish in the College, but also at entrance thereto. Some time ago, we learn, Irish was, at the oft-repeated request of the Gaelic League, included in the Entrance Programme. Every student seeking admission to the College is therefore bound to submit himself for examination in Irish, unless he has already passed in the subject at the Matriculation Examination of the Royal University. This requirement is not, it seems, absolute. To the Bishops individually, we are told, is reserved the right to dispense their students from the examination, if they choose to do so. We learn, furthermore, that although students who have neither been dispensed nor passed a recognised examination, are bound to submit themselves to examination, it is not necessary that they should pass; so far, those who have failed have been admitted equally with those who have passed.

If what has been so far set down is true, there is but one possible conclusion to be drawn. So far as Irish is concerned, the Maynooth entrance examination is most unsatisfactory. Indeed, one wonders why it is held at all. In the first place the unrestricted right of dispensation renders the regulation to a large extent nugatory—more especially as we are told that the right has been freely exercised. In the second place, it is hard to defend the holding of an examination, failure to pass which involves no penalty whatever. If, therefore, the Gaelic League, in the light of these revelations, is satisfied with the concessions made to it, it is not difficult to satisfy it. One can well understand that the right of dispensing, on a moderate scale and for specific reasons, might have been necessary for a time. It must

* Sinn Féin, July 25, 1908.

be borne in mind, however, that the regulation did not come into force for two years after it was made; yet, now that it has been some years in force, the right of dispensing is still largely exercised, and Irish as a subject for entrance to the College is merely a nominal requirement. Whatever may be said about the older phase of the controversy as to the status of Irish in Maynooth, what has been so far revealed as to the new phase is certainly not reassuring. For the present we must leave the matter there.

Passing to the older question, to wit, the status of Irish during the Collegiate course, no one who has even perfunctorily followed the somewhat fitful discussion that has been going on since the unfortunate legislation of the Trustees last October, can be unaware how unsatisfactory the existing arrangements are.

It may be well to recall that the question is not a new one. Last October it came before the public in an acute form; but, as I have been reminded by recent excursions of mine amongst newspaper files, that was by no means its first appearance. As far back as 1904, it caused momentary trouble. At that time, I gather, the Maynooth authorities decided that their Arts students should be made to graduate in the Royal University. This change made it necessary that the Programme of Studies should be somewhat modified. Within the College, it appears, opinion was unanimous that, because of the exceptional position and claims of the National language, its status should in no way be interfered with. It had been for many years obligatory; it ought so to remain. Those who would not, or could not, take it up as a University subject, should have suitable Collegiate lectures provided for them. The Trustees, however, demurred. As Irish was not obligatory for the University, they decided to make it a purely voluntary subject.

Soon after the Trustees had thus lowered the status of the National language, the matter became public. There was considerable discussion in the Press. It was pointed out that happen what might, Irish should be obligatory in Maynooth; and that what had been done was in effect a degradation of the national language. The Archbishop of Dublin, I believe, specially interested himself in the matter; and largely through his efforts the obnoxious and reactionary regulation was cancelled. When this became publicly known, universal satisfaction was felt. A brief article which appeared at the time in a metropolitan weekly reflects the feeling that prevailed and is worth reproducing:—

"The news from Maynooth is welcome, and is, so far, satisfactory. The arrangement now made, however, about Irish does no more than secure for the national language the status which, at the very least, it ought to enjoy in the National College. Ireland is not Persia or Patagonia, nor is the Irish language a foreign tongue. The national language ought to be an essential and obligatory feature of Irish education. Where should the recognition of this principle be looked for if not in Maynooth? If

the language be not obligatory for ecclesiastical students, particularly in Maynooth, how can its recognition as an obligatory subject be looked for and insisted upon elsewhere?

"To do Maynooth justice, this appears to be the view of the authorities there. We understand that the domestic action of the College has been satisfactory throughout. The Collegiate bodies unanimously recommended that Irish should be made compulsory during the first two years of the course, and this not merely because the University regulations, in existing circumstances, threatened to prejudice its study, but also on broadly national grounds, or, as the wording of the resolution has it—'for other obvious reasons.'

"This is only what might reasonably be expected at the present stage of the Language Movement. The possible bearing of University courses on the fortunes of the language, and all other such considerations apart, Irish ought, on national grounds, to be obligatory in Maynooth and, for that matter, in all Irish Colleges and Seminaries. Even if the voluntary or alternative arrangement should practically lead to the same results, the study of the national language should, on the highest grounds, be obligatory, during, at all events the early part of the course. There may be a few—but they must be very few—who cannot take it as a University subject. Any such should be obliged to take it as a Collegiate subject.

"Again the writer would like to repeat that Irish is not Chinese. It is not Arabic. It is not French or German or Italian. It is the National Language—without it there can be no national education in any grade.

"It is to be hoped that the arrangements now operative in Maynooth will be henceforth continued, and that all other Irish educational establishments will follow suit."

Who the writer of the aforesaid article may be, I have no idea. Be he who he may, he deals with the subject in the proper way, and advances the only correct view. It is not, and never was, a question of the utility or otherwise of obligatory classes. It is a question of the status which befits the national language. A voluntary subject is necessarily a minor and subordinate subject. The national language should occupy no such position. National dignity demands that its status should be one of the first importance; and still more does it demand that on no accouut should it be degraded from a higher to a subordinate position.

As far as I can piece the history together, thus did matters stand towards the close of 1904. Everyone hoped that a controversy which was distasteful to all parties was done with for ever. But the general hope was doomed to disappointment. Three years later the controversy was to break out afresh, and, as was inevitable, in a more bitter form. In the earlier instance, it was possible to urge on behalf of the Trustees that they did not fully

realise the real character or possible results of their action. On the second occasion, however, no such defence could be advanced. In 1904 the question had been discussed sufficiently to put the issues involved before everybody in the clearest light. The national language ought to be obligatory; it was now reduced in status, and so it was degraded. The new arrangement was bound to hit it hard. A direct and powerful inducement was held out to the thoughtless, the indolent, the mean-souled, to abandon the study of the national language; and, as might have been expected, the temptation proved too strong for very many. All this had been explained and repeated and reiterated; so it was well understood. There was no longer either excuse or palliation. The national language was treated worse than others; much worse than the alien tongue which national infatuation chiefly had forced upon so many of us. Honour and pride of place and power should still be the lot of the language of the conqueror; but even from such place as it had for a considerable time enjoyed, the national tongue should step down. The fate which was once that of the ancient faith had become that of the national language.

'Thy rival wast honoured whilst thou wert wronged and scorned."

The hands which dealt the blow were those from which it could have been least expected; and the place where it fell the very last place in which anyone could have anticipated it.

The blow fell nevertheless. There was no ceremony about it on this occasion. As I understand the matter, no responsibility attaches to the Academic bodies. They had not anticipated it. On the initiative of the President, it was dealt by the Trustees on their own sole responsibility. It came like a bolt from the blue. Everybody had thought that in 1904 the matter had been finally determined in favour of the language; that what had then been done would not be gone back upon; that there would at least be no further reaction.

The reasons against lowering the status of the National language were well understood, and were deemed to be overwhelming. Such reasons as could be urged in favour of lowering it were flimsy and pettifogging.

The arrangement finally adopted in 1904 was not, it is true, formally cancelled, but the effect was practically the same. Bishops were empowered to dispense their students from attendance at Irish lectures, and the right of dispensing was largely availed of. A few bishops stood firm, very few; but these cases apart, all dispensations sought for were promptly granted, and the number of applications was considerable.

In the recent discussion, it has been sought to confuse the issue. In plain language, some of the protagonists of Maynooth have, with doubtful wisdom, sought to make the students a

screen for the administration. Indeed, the President, in his correspondence with the Gaelic League, led the way in this matter — we have had glowing pictures of the enthusiasm of the students, of their widespread interest in the National language, and of the work they have done and are doing. Nobody wishes to belittle the work or the enthusiasm of the students; but it may be pointed out that their enthusiasm is the growth of the period when Irish was obligatory, and that the momentum then attained has not spent itself, and, it is to be hoped, never will.

But the question is not how the students feel or what they are doing. The real question is the status of the Irish language in the College, and that is one which affects the administration alone. They alone can secure for the national language the status it ought to have. They alone can make it obligatory; obligatory it has been, obligatory it should be, and obligatory it should remain. The hope that the failures at the University examinations might be slightly diminished, or that the list of University distinctions might, perhaps, be ever so slightly increased thereby, is a ridiculously insufficient reason for degrading the national language. Even if the object sought to be attained were as certain as it is problematical, what importance will anyone attach to a few failures the less, or to a few distinctions the more, in ten years time. But the effect on the fortunes of the national language of what has been done may be great and far reaching. Surely great national considerations should not be placed in the balance with mere issues of a day.

Irish until last October was obligatory during the first two years of the College course; it is so, in effect, no longer. For all practical purposes it is now a purely voluntary subject. And there are those who would have us believe that this is, on all grounds, a perfectly satisfactory arrangement. English was obligatory during the same years, and is obligatory still. It is obligatory not only whilst the University makes it so, but for a year longer. If the voluntary principle is held to be so eminently satisfactory for Irish, why is it not held to be equally so for English? If the obligatory Irish classes, as we are confidently assured, never did the slightest good, why are not the English classes at once made voluntary? Why is Latin not made voluntary? Why is Irish the only subject under heaven to which the voluntary principle may be applied with such magical success?

These are questions to which critics of the Irish-Ireland attitude towards Maynooth and its present Regulations in regard to Irish would do well to consider. A little serious thought bestowed upon them might save some of them at least from making themselves ridiculous in the future.

MAYNOOTH AND THE GAELIC LEAGUE.

AMERICAN MISCONCEPTIONS.*

By Cloynensis.

In the *Irish World*, a prominent Irish-American journal published in New York, there appeared some time ago what purported to be a reasoned and authentic statement of the nature and causes of the existing quarrel between Irish Ireland and Maynooth College. In this way did the statement come to be published. One who wished to be known to the readers of the aforesaid journal only as "A Subscriber" thereto, received, it would appear, a letter from a senior student in Maynooth. In this letter the writer, amongst other things, undertook to trace for his friends the origin, causes and development of the quarrel about the status of Irish in the College. "A Subscriber" thought it well to excerpt some passages from his correspondent's letter, and to forward them for publication in the *Irish World*, accompanied by a brief explanatory note. Both were published in due course.

The extracts published from the letter of "A Senior Student" are quite inexplicably inaccurate and wholly misleading. They are calculated to give readers of the journal in which they appeared an utterly wrong impression of what occurred. This I felt the moment I read them; but, wishing to make quite sure, I made careful inquiries in the proper quarters, and found that my first impressions were fully justified. I then wrote a letter of explanation to the journal in which the misleading statements had appeared; but, for some reason which I am at a loss to determine, my letter has not been published.

To make clear the misleading character of the statements referred to, it is necessary first of all to give some extracts. I shall endeavour to make them as brief as possible. "The dispute between Maynooth and the Gaelic League has caused some trouble, and is likely to cause more. Of course, official Maynooth is entirely responsible; and from the nature of things official Maynooth is hardly to blame. You are aware that the bishops adopted the Royal University programme for the Arts course here, making it obligatory on all students to take out their degree in Arts before being permitted to study theology. Before this innovation Irish was obligatory on all for the first two years. During the first two years of the new programme's working, Irish retained its old obligatory standing. Then a change was found necessary, the reason of which was this: A great number of students came up here from the diocesan seminaries—the majority in fact—who

* The Peasant, August 8, 1908.

knew no Irish . . . . The Matriculation has to be gone through before entering here; then the first year's men are sent on for First Arts, Irish being obligatory, the result was that students who came here with no knowledge, or only a child's knowledge, of the language, had to attain to the First Arts standard of proficiency in one year . . . . Students had to devote too much time to Irish, to the detriment of their other studies; and in most cases even the best of them were unable to acquire the requisite knowledge in one year—and failed miserably. The ruling body of the College was in a dilemma. Three courses were open to them, not one of which was without its difficulties. They had either to throw up the University system altogether or permit no student to enter college who had not been already well grounded in Irish, or make Irish an optional subject . . . . The third proposal was the only feasible, practical, and seemingly all-round the best one, and it was accordingly adopted. Students were not directly dispensed, but they could apply for a dispensation to their bishop who would dispense them or not as he pleased." There is much more, but I have given the essential portions.

Of what I have quoted, much is the wildest romance. How anybody living in Maynooth, and so having the best opportunities of knowing the exact facts, could, even in a private letter, have made himself responsible for some of the statements quoted, passes comprehension.

1. No student whatever was bound to take Irish as a University subject. Whether at his advent to Maynooth, he knew Irish well, or fairly, or not at all, he was left quite free. He need not have presented Irish as one of his subjects at the First Arts examination, or at any subsequent examination, unless he freely elected to do so.

2. The statement "that students who came here with no knowledge, or only a child's knowledge, of the language, had to attain to the First Arts standard of proficiency in one year," is not only not true, but it is absolutely the reverse of truth.

3. The dilemma in which "the ruling body of the college" are represented as having found themselves is, therefore, an absolute myth.

4. Equally mythical are the wholesale failures referred to, as well as the supposed bearing thereon of the regulation making Irish compulsory. There were no wholesale failures; on the contrary the percentage of failures as compared with that for the students of the University generally was, I understand, very small; and for those failures the responsibility, if any, of the regulation aforesaid was of the slightest.

5. The force of the regulation was that for the first two years of the course students were obliged to attend Irish lectures; but not necessarily that they were obliged to study Irish for the

University, or to present it as a University subject. They could, of course, take it as a University subject if they desired to do so; but there was no obligation. If, however, they did not take it as a University subject, they had to take it as a Collegiate subject, and to attend lectures suited to their proficiency.

6. The programme that they were required to master was not that of the First Arts, as stated, but a special Collegiate programme. This programme I have seen; and not only is it not as difficult as the First Arts programme, but, having compared both, I am quite safe in saying that it was not as difficult as the Intermediate Preparatory Grade programme. It could make but a very slight demand on the time or application of the students—certainly not as much as the English programme which, for the first two years, is still obligatory, not merely for those who present English at the University Examinations but for those who (in the Second Arts year) do not.

From what has been written two things stand out plainly enough. In the first place, it will be seen how very inaccurate and misleading some of the statements of "A Senior Student" are. Secondly, it will be seen how very little ground there was for lowering the status of Irish in Maynooth, and for thus degrading the national language. There might, perhaps, be a failure or two the less, or possibly a distinction or two the more—especially the latter. That was the be all and the end-all of the legislation which, after Irish had been obligatory for so many years, led to its being made practically an optional subject