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## *Ideals in Education.*

By ANDREW E. MALONE.

"The Story of a Success." By P. H. Pearse. Edited by Desmond Ryan. Dublin: Maunsell. 3s. 6d. net.

The name of Padraic Pearse will to-day probably bring to the minds of the majority of Irish people a picture of a strong, heroic man, who died for the faith that was in him. Such a picture of Pearse is very incomplete. The whole philosophy of Pearse was not contained in his willingness to "die for Ireland." He died for Ireland; but while he lived, he lived for Ireland. In the twentieth century such a man as Padraic Pearse is difficult to find. The dominating idea of this century, as it was also the dominating idea of the nineteenth century, is selfishness. The bulk of humanity seeks individual gain, individual fame, individual applause, individual comfort, ease, refinement. In P. H. Pearse, egotism, individualism, and selfishness were entirely lacking. He served an ideal, where other men served only themselves. Had he served his own interests only, he would in all probability be alive to-day—a prosperous literary man, with a certain halo of fame about him. He elected to serve his fellow men, his fellow-countrymen, rather than to serve himself. Ireland is fortunate in breeding many unselfish people; throughout our history we have had them, we have them to-day. Commercialism has not yet entirely engulfed us; the horror of the economic man has not yet become our ideal, and if our country is to contribute its quota to the world's progress, we must eliminate that horror from our midst. There are people in Ireland who adore the golden calf, and there are people who drive great good men like Padraic Pearse, as they drove

Moses, to smash the tables of the law. The law for Pearse consisted of the dictates of a fine Christian conscience. His law was not the law of respectability, the law of conventionality, or of mediocre money-making. He chose what to the bourgeoisie mind is the primrose path, but in reality the path strewn with thorns. He was an idealist who tried—and succeeded to some extent—to put his ideals into practice. He was a great educationalist, and was incidentally a poet and a playwright. He died a rebel in politics; he lived a rebel in almost everything, but essentially a rebel against prevailing educational systems.

This book brings together for us the educational ideals of Pearse, which he practised in the school founded and conducted by himself. "Pearse longed for and won many victories in his lifetime," says Mr. Ryan in his preface. "He was one of the remarkable men of his generation. The breath of life which crept into the dying bodies of once potent agitators, which entered into the moribund national consciousness of Ireland, which produced the revival of nationality we saw in the Irish-Ireland Movement is best expressed in him. Before he grasped a physical sword he was killing himself by inches in his ardent and unflagging labours for Irish education." His work for Irish education led him to found and conduct Sgoil Fhna (St. Enda's School) at Cullenswood House, Ranelagh, and in this school he put into practice his ideas of what Irish education ought to be. Speaking of the formation of St. Enda's, Pearse himself said: "I interested

a few friends in the project of a school which should aim at the making of good men rather than of learned men, but of men truly learned rather than of persons qualified to pass examinations; and as my definition of a good man; as applied to an Irishman includes the living good Irishmen (for you cannot make an Irish boy a good Englishman or a good Frenchman), and as my definition of learning as applied to an Irishman, includes learning as its basis and fundament, it follows that my school should be an Irish school in a sense not known or dreamt of in Ireland since the Flight of the Earls." Again he says: "We must be worthy of the tradition we seek to recreate and perpetuate in Eire—the Knightly tradition of the Macradh of Eamhain Macha, dead at the ford, in the beauty of their boyhood; the high tradition of Cuchulain: 'Better is short life with honour than long life with dishonour'; . . . the noble tradition of the Fianna: 'We, the Fianna, never told a lie, falsehood was never imputed to us, strength in our hands, truth on our lips, and cleanness in our hearts'; the Christian tradition of Columcille: 'If I die, it shall be from the excess of love I bear the Gael.'"

It was upon this foundation that Pearse hoped to build the characters of men who would be "brave and unselfish, and truthful and pure." "Philosophy is as old as the hills," he says, "and the science of to-day is only a new flowering of the science that made lovely the ancient cities and gardens of the East. With all our learning we are not yet as cultured as were the Greeks who crowded to hear the plays of Sophocles; with all our art institutions we have not yet that love for the beautiful which burned in the heart of the Middle Ages. All the problems with which we strive were long ago solved by our ancestors, only their solutions have been forgotten. Take the problem of education—that is, the problem of bringing up a child. We constantly speak and write as if a philosophy of education were first formulated in our own time. But all the wise peoples of old faced and solved that problem for themselves, and most of their solutions were better than ours. Professor Culverwell thinks that the Jews gave it the best solution. For my part, I salute the old Irish. The philosophy of education is preached now, but it was practised by the founders of the Gaelic system two thousand years ago. Their very names for 'education' and 'teacher' and 'pupil' show that they had gripped the heart of the problem. The word for 'education' among the old Gael was the same as the word for 'fostering,' the teacher was a 'fosterer' and the pupil was a 'foster-child.' Now to 'foster' is exactly the function of a teacher, not primarily to 'lead up,' to 'guide,' to 'conduct through a course of studies,' and still less to 'indoctrinate,' to 'inform,' to 'prepare for exams,' but primarily to 'foster' the elements of character already present." This is what Pearse attempted to do at St. Enda's. The success of his pupils, as the world counts success to-day, is proof that the 'education' was really 'education,' not mere cramming. He produced men who are yet to take their place in the making of a new Ireland. But the greatest test of his success is the great love they treasure for him who was once their Headmaster.

"The true work of the teacher may be said to be, to help the child to realise himself at his best and worthiest. One does not want to make each of one's pupils a replica of oneself (God forbid), holding the selfsame opinions, prejudices, likes, illusions. Neither does one want to drill all one's pupils into so many regulation little soldiers or so many stodgy little citizens, though this is apparently the aim of some of the most cried-up of modern systems. In point of fact, man is not primarily a member of a State, but a human individuality—that is a human soul impressed in a human body; a shivering human soul, with its own awful problem, its own august destiny, lonelier in its house of clay than any prisoner in any bastille in the world. The true teacher will recognise in each of his pupils an individual human soul, distinct and different from every other human soul that has ever been fashioned by God, miles and miles apart from the soul that is nearest and most akin to it, craving, indeed, comradeship and sympathy and pity, needing also, it may be, discipline and guidance and a restraining hand, but imperiously demanding to be allowed to live its own life, to be allowed to bring itself to its own perfection; because for every soul there is a perfection meant for it alone, and which it alone is capable of obtaining. So the primary office of the teacher is to foster that of good which is native in the soul of his pupil, striving to bring its inborn excellences to ripeness rather than to implant in it excellences exotic to its nature. It comes to this, then, that the education of a child is greatly a matter, in the first place of congenial environment, next to this of a wise and loving watchfulness, whose chief appeal will be to the finest instincts of the child itself." Therein speaks the born teacher, the man born to foster all that is best in his "comrades." It were well for Ireland that every teacher in her schools were actuated with the ideals of Pearse, and were at the same time sincere and equipped for the great work he had undertaken. The brand of the "National Board" would then be impossible.

Pearse's exposition of the old Gaelic educational ideal—one can hardly call it a "system"—suggests some comparison with the Montessori method. The essence of both is freedom, as the aim of both is the development, to its greatest extent, of the inherent good qualities of the pupil. Under the Montessori system, we are told, freedom becomes self-control to an extent that is remarkable in young children. The founder of the Montessori method would make the atmosphere of the school religious; Pearse would have it religious and patriotic. The difference is not very great. Madame Montessori would have us try to emulate the Christ life; Pearse would have us in addition emulate the lives of the great heroes of our national history. "The value of the national factor in education," he said once in a lecture, "would appear to rest chiefly in this, that it addresses itself to the most generous side of the child's nature, urging him to live as to his finest self." To bring the national factor to bear, Pearse, in addition to the national heroic literature, would take Ireland for granted. His object was not that of the National Board and make "happy English" children. "You need not praise the Irish language—simply speak it; you need not denounce English games

—play Irish ones; you need not ignore foreign history, foreign literatures—deal with them from the Irish point of view. An Irish school need no more be a purely Irish-speaking school than an Irish nation need be a purely Irish-speaking nation; but an Irish school, like an Irish nation, must be permeated through and through by Irish culture, the repository of which is the Irish Language. I do not think that a purely Irish-speaking school is a thing to be desired; at all events, a purely Irish-speaking secondary or higher school, that is no longer possible. These are certainly not the words of a "bad European," which some people think is synonymous with "good Irishman." They are not the words of a fanatic, nor the words of a snob. It is to Pearse's credit, surely, that St. Enda's did not produce a snob.

"The ideas of a dreamer, this college!" says someone. "Oh! never believe it," says Mr. Ryan in his Retrospect; "in this system, inter-penetrated with a lofty ideal, room was found for such practical subjects as carpentry and gardening for boys, needlework and cooking for girls, and ambulance and first-aid for both boys and girls. And the boys and girls who were asked

to be ready to emulate Emmet's or Anne Devlin's heroism, were sent into the University, and carried off first prizes in classics or competed at the Feis Ceol, and were awarded gold medals. Are we the less efficient in the practical affairs of life, in the study or in the workshop, in the market place or in the home, for our possessing and trying to live up to some enkindling ideal?" Our education "systems" to-day are not in the least likely to provide us with enkindling ideals. They are eminently successful in killing any ideals one may possess. Knowledge is not education, and success at examinations is not the end of life. Anyone who manages to keep his ideals intact throughout our Intermediate system is a person very much to be envied indeed. Pearse had a great contempt for the Intermediate, and who will say that he was not justified? This is a book to be read by all who care for education. We should like to see it in the hands of every teacher in Ireland. It is, perhaps, too much to ask a teacher dealing with the British Treasury to be idealistic, but we think this book will help him. We thank Mr. Desmond Ryan and Messrs. Maunsel for a great book; a book that may work an epoch in Irish education.

## The Theatre and Social Reform.

The presentation at two city theatres of plays dealing with social problems, raises again the question of the drama as an instrument of social reform. Experience up-to-date seems to show that however striking and effective a play may be in the theatre, however scathing in its exposures, merciless in its satires, or inspiring in its idealism, the effect on the audience passes as they make their exit from the world of make-believe. This is borne out by this week's presentations in Dublin.

Is the production of "Blight"—which cannot be placed in any artistic category, and for which, therefore, "art for art's sake" cannot be pleaded—justified by any possibility that it will give an impulse to radical reform of the evils it satirises? It adds nothing to our knowledge. It propounds no remedies, suggests no possibility of change, and by its exaggerations enables critics of our "dailies" to cast doubt upon the extent of the moral damage and dangers of the condition of the people.

"Blight" is a rehash of Zola's "Dram Shop" and Shaw's "Widowers' Houses," with traces of Brieux and Dr. Linton, and a touch of Victoria Monks to give it spice. It is all-embracing in its censures

The Church and Booze, district visiting and slum landlordism, the callous medico and the pompous public man, and the mean, cunning political impostor are brought to speak their lines on the magic carpet and to tell the truth for once. The brutal, shameful things of Dublin, the overcrowded tenements, the sweated female worker greedily snatching joy at the sacrifice of health and virtue, the sordid financial speculation in misery, and the open corruption of municipal life, are made an open show upon the stage.

The authors have courage—but it achieves nothing. The people who barracked "The Playboy" for the honour of the Western World, laugh at the folly and crime of their own city, and applaud with partizan zeal a casual reference to Catholic indifference to social evils, because the authors have contrasted it with the meddling of the Soupers.

We know the failures of organised charity and the social ambulance work of the hospitals, but the authors of

"Blight" have not realised with Oscar Wilde, that these are not merely futile and ridiculous remedies, but are part of the social disease. Physical ills may be understood by the surgeon and make the raw materials of his stage jokes, but until he studies the structure of the social organism he should keep his plays for the entertainment of his personal friends.

At the Gaiety, "Industry" satirises the played-out landed aristocracy in contrast with the hustling vigour of the returned emigrant, a typical swaggering hero of the industrial short story in the cheaper American magazines. A charming ingenue bleats ineffectively about work and its glories, and the curtain falls on a cliché about "another ruined industry"—sure to draw the cheers of the disciples of Friedrich List.

In both plays the representatives of the working class are cast for contemptible parts, and the only healthy social force in Ireland is held up to ridicule in the false and libellous caricatures of Stanislaus Tully, fraudulent litigant, speculator in vice and "T. C.," and of McNamee, the dynamitard. The authors display complete ignorance of the Labour movement, its objects, and its methods. And as they lack understanding, they display, not sympathy, but antipathy.

COLKITTO.

### ARE YOU A LIVE WIRE?

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# The Gaelic State.\*

PLEA FOR A NEW NATIONAL, SOCIAL SYSTEM.

By TOM DONOVAN.

Rather we may say that dynasties and thrones, and even provisional governments, are good for anything exactly in proportion as they secure fair play, justice, and freedom to those who labour.

—John Mitchel.

There are two consequences in history—an immediate one which is at once recognised—and one in the distance, which is not at first perceived. These consequences often contradict each other—the former are the results of our own limited wisdom—the latter those of the wisdom that endures.—Chateaubriand.

In the "Gaelic State" Mr. Darrell Figgis writes on the subject which is agitating the minds of many Irishmen. From conversations we had with them, we are aware that three of the executed military and intellectual leaders of Easter Week passionately believed in the necessity for the re-conversion of Ireland to the Gaelic principle of common ownership. Probably a majority of their comrades, shot to death, had the same belief. The subject is of supreme national interest. May God grant us light to treat of it truthfully, justly, and clearly.

Under which flag shall we serve—the flag of Christ or that of Satan? The highest attainable happiness or the illusion thereof depends on the answer. Even for consistency's sake we should stand under the banner of either justice or injustice. Passing alternately from beneath one to the other is cowardly and treacherous. Yet that is what most legislators do, and they are styled honourable gentlemen. These men are the product of the existing social order, and its sins are theirs. It is clear, therefore, that progress or retrogression is each dependent on social systems.

"Nearly all modern European culture and learning rest," writes Mr. Figgis, "on what Ireland wrought during the sixth, seventh, and eight centuries." The gift and the debt are acknowledged by all reputable European scholars. The men who sowed these seeds of culture and who insinuated the love of Christ into the hearts of pagan Europeans were the product of the Irish clan system. Exponents of truth and justice were they when the land of Ireland belonged, "not to individual users, but to the stateship," and when "law was not a mere technical contrivance, but founded on a whole nation's sense of justice." That cultural, and this religious work, our greatest achievement, was hampered slightly at first, and appreciably so later by a defect in the polity of the Gaelic State. Rank in the stateship rested on responsibility which, in its highest measure, was represented in the person of the stateship—King. The selection of this chief officer was based on inheritance—that evil system which, down through the centuries, has diluted the blood of man with lust and lewdness,

envy, and hate. This blemish of state-ship-government was the cause and the ally of foreign invasion. In the militarist rule of the invader inheritance was ingrained, and therein continues to reside. Shall we go on rubbing vaseline on the cancer? To raise the question is to answer it. We can picture the head-shake of prejudice, and indignation of ignorance which the question occasions. Both we shall meet calmly with our declaration of social faith.

We submit to obedience, since we obey God's commands. Fealty to just authority is indispensable to order and unity. We bespeak for every man the right of perfect freedom in everything which does not invade the rights of his neighbour. We believe constitutional morality to be the impregnable guardian of liberty. Is there anything morally wrong in our social faith? His Holiness Pius the Tenth in his letter on the Sillon says:—"The social machinery ought to be so organised as by its NATURAL action to paralyse the efforts of the wicked and to render accessible to every man of goodwill his legitimate share of temporal happiness."

How are the rights of thousands of human beings in, say, Dublin and Derry invaded? An answer is—through the operation of foreign law based on militarist feudalism. With merciless grip and measured cunning the tentacles of that law strangle and blind, even to the extent of making the land-man in Limerick the invader of the Dublin slumman's right. It is clear that the health of the nation must be restored and preserved by cutting this cancer of feudalism at the root, and eliminating all influences favourable to its re-growth. The less pain attendant on the operation the better.

Irish land is being criminally neglected. The French peasant secures more food from five acres than the Irish squireen extracts from fifty. And yet a congenital idiot can inherit a thousand acres while sane men starve! How far men have strayed from the path of moral civilisation! The man who descants on the sin of wanton waste and who uses his land merely to cater for the cravings of John Bull's belly is a pitiable example of ignorance. Intensive cultivation ought to limit a man's activity to about five acres. Herein lies the hint for a painless operation.

We are grateful to Mr. Figgis for his lucid account of the workings of the Gaelic State. We should be more grateful still had he said Yes or No to the question—should the land of Ireland belong to all or only to some of the people?

In our view, he writes a Girondesque chapter in the "Gates of the Future." We suggest that lack of courage rather than dulness of intellect inspired it. The acutest mind oftentimes fears, or suc-

cumbs to, the tyranny of a catch-cry.

Socialism is rarely, if ever, discussed logically or calmly. It generates an atmosphere charged with the language of violence. When its antagonisms reach the extreme, ignorance and intolerance, vague discontent, and studied atheism creep in. Our conception of a new Gaelic State is not germinated from the seed of socialistic charlatany; nor yet inspired by a spirit of Chauvinism. It is, we repeat, based on the non-invasion of right. We abhor wrongs committed in the name of Christianity because such are Satanic. "The devil has a right to rule if we let him, but he has no right to call his rule Christian civilisation." Our reference to Socialism is intended to anticipate and meet thoughtless criticism of our social viewpoint. There is ample room for moral, material, and cultural development in our conception of a Gaelic State. We postulate the necessity of limitation WHERE LIMITATION PROVIDES AGAINST INVASION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHT.

What Mr. Figgis writes on the subject of the Irish Language is sound. In addition to its intellectual the language has great practical value. As a weapon of national defence it is superior to shot and shell. As a moral prop it takes rank with the Rosary. The illusion of pleasure in vice would be dispelled by the practice of virtue compelled by the awakened spiritual outlook of the Gael.

Did space permit, we would castigate the delivery of selfishness which endeavours to hebetate human intellect. Gladly would we tell of the "Statesmanship" which manufactures rebels and then slaughters its own creations. To shatter the illusion of the conception of wealth as a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence would need a separate article. But even a reference to these subjects does something to maintain unity of logic in the presentation of our conception of a true Gaelic State.

Calmness, sincerity, and, chiefly, courage, are necessary to discussion of the great topic with which this article deals. Let us not, in the words of Davis, mistake Ireland for a colony wronged and great enough to be a nation, nor yet, to vary Mitchel, visualise a free Ireland in the plaything of Peers, or nominees of Peers in College Green. Above all, the words of Leo the Thirteenth should sink into our minds:—"Provided Justice be safeguarded, nations are not forbidden to give themselves the form of government most in harmony with their character or with the institutions and customs they have received from their ancestors."

What about the formation of a Gaelic State Fellowship?

\* The Gaelic State in the Past and Future. Darrell Figgis. Published by Maunsel and Co., Ltd.

## International Notes.

The crime of lese America is apparently one of the few points of unanimity between all parties in Ireland and England. On no account must one dare to impute evil to the great moral Republic of which Dr. Wilson is the fitting ornament. Sinn Feiners are as sedulous as Redmondites in defending America from any suspicion of criticism, and Dora is particularly benevolent in shielding Uncle Sam from all comment which does not exhibit him as the professional gladiator of Democracy. Yet, whenever one opens an American newspaper, it is difficult to understand this modesty which insists upon saving an ally from comparisons which certainly redound to the credit of the European sense of fair play and decency. The lynching of Socialists is a pastime not yet fashionable in this part of the world, nor have we even got to the length of tarring and feathering the representatives of Labour, a mild form of recent American patriotism. While the American Secret Service men fill the American Press with accounts of their successful campaign against Sinn Fein spokesmen in the United States, our national Press is busy defending the Americans from the charge of a hostility which they themselves are at no pains to conceal. Why this determination to give certificates of good character to a body of men who have so long and so notoriously worked to suppress all manifestations of political and industrial freedom?

However squeamishly Dora may shrink from the publication of facts which are current newspaper topics in America, however much certain Sinn Fein commentators may protest the innocence of the American Government, we do not think that any readers of the American papers will deny that the combined effect of mob hysteria and administrative oppression has been to make the American world most unsafe for democracy. The universities are dismissing professors whose sentiments are those of the Lansdowne letter, federal juries are bringing indictments under the incredible Espionage Laws against periodicals and journalists whose opinions are freely expressed in England and Scotland—and exported to Ireland—by such journals as "The Herald," "The Labour Leader," and "Forward." The absence of a regular postal and press censorship has been got round characteristically by endowing every postmaster with unlimited powers. The technical pretext of a false seaman's certificate under which Liam Mellows was arrested is typical of the underhand methods employed. When one thinks of the armed motor cars used to disperse Labour and Sinn Fein meetings in New York and elsewhere throughout the States, it is a little difficult to understand the liberal use of whitewash to which we have been treated in this country. James Connolly, at least, had no illusions about America as the friend

of Irish democracy, and we say to his followers: Beware of the apologists of America, who pretend that England is solely responsible for the unpleasant truths coming from that side of the Atlantic.

One of the most prominent personalities in the campaign against pacifists, Sinn Feiners, and German-Americans is James W. Gerard, lately American Ambassador at Berlin. As copious advertising and a great newspaper boom have informed us, this gentleman has published a volume of reminiscences under the title, "My Four Years in Germany," whose contents have been familiarised to thousands who cannot afford to waste the three half-crowns charged for the book. Dora permitting, we propose to give here a few strophes from the Hon. Gent's prose, as we do not recollect seeing the passages in question in any prominent position in the pages of our pure-souled contemporaries.

The following testimony to the democratic simplicity of the English at the Ruhleben internment camp has a particular interest coming from so fervent a friend of Great Britain: "The man who finally appeared as head man of the camp was an ex-cinematograph proprietor named Powell. In my mind he, assisted by Beaumont and other captains, conducted the affairs of the camp as well as possible, given the difficulty of dealing with the prisoners on the one hand and the prison authorities on the other hand. Naturally he was always subject to opposition from many prisoners, among whom those of aristocratic tendencies objected to being under the control of one not of the highest caste in Great Britain." Lest this picture of the "fraternisation" of which we have heard so much should be insufficient, Gerard continues: "I found it impossible to get British prisoners to perform the ordinary work of cleaning up the camp, and so forth, always expected of prisoners themselves, and so, with the funds furnished me from the British Government, the camp captain was compelled to pay a number of the poorer prisoners to perform this work." The italicised portions of this extract, from the statement of an observer whose bias is in favour of England, and who was the official representative of British interests in Germany, are recommended to the working class which is helping to provide the funds to save these democratic friends of democracy the trouble of soiling their hands with manual labour.

We have all been horrified when the Curzons, Carsons, and Milners begin to describe the devilries of the Prussian Junker, and if we have not thanked God for having spared us the terrible curse inflicted upon the Hun, it is simply because we are not patriotic enough to distinguish between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. But if James W. Gerard is

to be believed—and who will dare to question one so favoured by our governmental gods?—there are Junkers and Junkers, and the odds are rather against the domestic species, as the following stanza witnesseth:

"There is no leisured class among the Junkers. They are all workers, patriotic, honest, and devoted to the Emperor and the Fatherland. If it is possible that Government by one class is to be suffered, then the Prussian Junkers have proved themselves more fit to rule than any class in all history. Their virtues are Spartan, their minds narrow but incorruptible, and their bravery and patriotism undoubted. One can but admire them and their stern virtues." Again we have italicised a few words in the hope that they may remain in the memory of the reader, who is asked also to recollect that the writer quoted is now engaged in appealing to the American people to go out into the trenches and destroy Prussianism. Of course, it is only in Germany that an oligarchy rules, and as Larkin and Emma Goldman know, the strenuous dependents on Rent and Interest in the U.S.A. have absolutely no powers nor privileges. If these hard-working Junkers are not destroyed, the world will not be safe for plutocracy. They are obviously the scabs of the leisured class.

The Spartan virtues of the Prussian Junker do not soften the heart of the innocent Gerard, for he is horrified at the lack of opportunity for the working man, and at the diabolical cunning of the German Government, which silences criticism, and stifles discontent, by the distribution of titles. "Such a thing as a German railway conductor rising to be president of the road is an impossibility in Germany," he cries indignantly, as if our W. M. Murphys had all been tram conductors, and as if Alf. Harmsworth had come into the world as Baron Northcliffe. He pities the poor German working man who is forced to "purchase his food at the rates fixed by the German Tariff for the benefit of the Prussian Junker and landowners." What a pity he did not ascertain from Morris Hillquit, during the recent New York election, how far the American worker has been consulted in fixing the rates of the American tariff. The Hon. James W. Gerard was too busy denouncing Hillquit as the tool of the Hohenzollern to ask himself the reason of that 450 per cent. increase in the Socialist vote. Had he done so, he might have discovered that the German workman is not the only one who is suffering from, and protesting against, exploitation in the name of patriotism. The Junkers of plutocracy should now engage the attention of that sterling democrat. He will have some difficulty in giving them such a testimonial as their Prussian colleagues have received from him.

## Notes and Comments.

### Christmas, 1917.

"Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will." These are words that meet the eye very frequently at Christmas time. But how hollow, even how ironical they sound now. The young of every nation at war have been deluded. There are few of them in this bloody business without some ideal to uphold and inspire them. They could never go on with the horrible business did not some ideal inspire them. The great actuating motive is Freedom; something undefined, practically indefinable. One of our own race who fought and died, the late T. M. Kettle, put his ideal thus:

Know that we fools, now with the  
foolish dead,  
Died not for Flag, nor King, nor  
Emperor,  
But for a dream, born in a herds-  
man's shed,  
And for the secret Scripture of the  
poor.

By no means that we know of can the ideal of Kettle be squared with the ideal of those financiers who engineered the Geneva Conference. There is stellar space between their relative places. But we think that Kettle's verse aptly summarises the plain, blunt, average man, who is to-day, over miles of territory, bent upon slaying his fellow-man. The "dream, born in a herdsman's shed," has no power with those who pass for statesmen. Another dream, incompatible with it, the dream of power, of gain, of conquest, has taken its place. The dream of the "herdsman's shed" is to-day only the dream of the Pope and of European Labour. "Love your neighbour as yourself." One may be imprisoned in England to-day for quoting those words, and sometimes even for less in Ireland. Meanwhile, even while Europe commits suicide the capitalists of the world can draw interest from war loans and profits from printing texts.

### The Cost of War.

The loss of human life in this war is appalling; the waste of wealth is scandalous. When Byron spoke of Napoleon "scattering nations' wealth like sand; scattering nations' blood like water in Imperial seas of slaughter," he accurately painted that great soldier's doings. Byron would stand aghast to-day. He might even have been stricken dumb, as all the poets have been, or else be used to bang the war-drum and sound the tocsin in favour of War Bonds. The newspaper space usually devoted to Beecham's Pills no longer asks us to purchase these things. Instead we are asked to buy War Bonds. Up to the present the war credits passed

by the British Parliament total £6,500,000,000 (six thousand, five hundred million pounds). Such figures probably convey nothing to us, but if we reduce them we find that interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum would amount to £325,000,000 (three hundred and twenty-five million pounds). Still too big for comprehension? The interest alone would mean a tax of £8 per annum upon every man, woman and child if the expenditure were to cease in March next. And when we reflect that this sum must be paid by the workers, perhaps in perpetuity, the prospect is not alluring. Unless some attempt is made by English workers to have capital conscripted, just as life has been, the end of the war will probably find capitalism more firmly entrenched than it has ever been. Those who possessed capital will, at the end of the war, actually find themselves enriched. We do not understand why English Labour has not been more insistent upon conscription of capital. It must be done if Labour is not to suffer a very severe setback. To us in Ireland the problem is somewhat different. The bulk of Irish taxation has always been indirect; it is so still. It is an impost upon the worker's food, and it appears to us that Irish Labour should actively assist any and every scheme made for the resistance of further impositions. We should like to see this very important matter taken up strenuously at once. In a short time we shall have another Budget, and then it may be too late to make effective protest.

### The Irish Teacher.

The lot of the Irish school teacher has not by any means been of the best. The salary scale has been quite insufficient, even in previous days, to maintain that standard of decency and comfort that is necessary if the teacher is to give his best to his pupils. Teaching is a most exacting occupation requiring gifts not possessed by everyone. It requires a long period of training and considerable expenditure for books, etc., yet at the end of the training course our teachers are paid less than the journeyman artisan; aye, even less than our policemen. In addition to living merely it is essential that our teachers should keep abreast of the best modern thought. To do this a good deal of money must of necessity be expended upon books and periodicals. This had to be done out of a very meagre salary, and we suppose that this expenditure has not generally been made. The teachers were for long of the same mind as the majority of clerks: they were too respectable to be Trade Unionists. At last they have learnt the lesson that passing resolutions and presenting petitions is a futile occupation. They have joined the ranks of Trade Unionists. And now, some small improvement in salaries is to be

made. In the very near future we hope to publish an article upon this subject from the pen of one of the ablest of the teachers' leaders, and in consequence we shall not go into details now, but we do say that the increase offered is totally inadequate to meet the changed conditions consequent upon the war. The so-called National Board has again given way to the British Treasury, and though Irish money may be used to blow shells into the Flanders air, it may not, apparently, be used for improving the conditions of Irish teachers and Irish schools. We trust the teachers will insist upon the improvement in their conditions, and we think we can promise them, in any steps they may find it necessary to take, the full sympathy and support of the Irish Trade Union movement, of which they now form a part. It may be necessary to go to extremes, and teachers must be prepared.

We are asked to inform our readers that the person recently fined at Phillipstown is not Mr. Padraic O Conaire, the well-known Irish writer. Mr. O Conaire was never in Phillipstown and has no knowledge whatever of the affair. Mr. O Conaire is well known in Labour circles in Dublin, and we trust that this correction of the daily Press report will be read by his many friends.

### Proportional Representation.

The spectacle of Mr. H. T. Bagrie, M.P., as the champion of Belfast labour is amusing. He told the House of Commons that the scheme for giving Belfast nine members was designed to secure to Labour full representation. Of course, he meant Labour which answers the call of the official Unionist Party, a body which has carefully planned that not a single Labour member sits on the City Council or the Board of Guardians. Mr. Devlin, in moving the adoption of a plan of proportional representation for Belfast and Dublin laid stress on this. He ought to have confessed that his own party, which controls two wards in Belfast, has eliminated the only Labour representative they had because he refused to be an obedient Party hack.

Labour in Belfast — independent Labour, even with a Socialist taint — can secure a third of the votes at any election, yet under the present system cannot obtain a single member. Dublin Labour could probably win half the seats if a sane system of securing representation in proportion to the number of supporters were in operation.

We regret the Devlin amendment was defeated. Whether for an Irish or a British Parliament, or for Local Government elections, we favour the proportional system. If the House of Lords amends the Bill in this direction we shall rejoice.

(Continued on Page 45.)

## IRISH OPINION.

The organ of Industrial and Political Democracy.

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Matter intended for publication in the following issue must reach the Office not later than Monday afternoon.

## In the midts of Plenty.

Sugar, tea, butter, margarine and milk are now practically unprocurable at any price. Bread, potatoes and meat are so high in price as to be almost beyond the reach of the average worker. Yet all these things are controlled. It seems to be the inevitable result of Controller's interference that the commodity controlled disappears from the market. Take sugar, for instance. It seems to us that had the Food Control Authorities any real interest in sugar distribution, they would have started by rationing every family in this article. Instead they gave the retailer carte blanche in distribution with the result that the retailer gave the sugar to those who agreed to pay the highest price, or to those who were otherwise agreeable to him. The ordinary sugar consumers had no rights; in fact it would seem that the only reason for the continued existence of the consumer is the provision of profits to the trader. Our newspapers shrieked in derision when early in the war the German Government started systematically to ration everybody. Germany is starving we were told then as now; we are less inclined to believe that cry now than we were in 1914. The patriotism of the wealthier classes, which led them to buy up everything available during the first war panic and to raise the price unnecessarily upon the poorer classes, is still sufficiently fervent to cause trouble and inconvenience. These people will hang cards about their servants' quarters, inviting all and sundry to "eat less bread," and voluntarily pledging somebody or other to submit to the food regulations. We are not taken in by these tricks; they mean nothing and often cover up, or attempt to cover up, hypocrisy of a very reprehensible kind. However at last some attempt is now being made to distribute sugar somewhat more equitably. We hope that some attention will also be given to these other commodities which are necessary to sustain human life.

In this country there should be no shortage of basic foodstuffs. This is very generally supposed to be an agricultural country primarily; and the most necessary foodstuffs are all produced here. We have no tea or sugar here, but we have sufficient meat or other commodities to exchange for such as are not produced here. We only produced sufficient wheat in the great tillage campaign last year to last us for nine weeks, so that our daily bread must be procured from elsewhere. We have, however, a large crop of potatoes—twice as much this year as we had last year; but here again the muddling of the Food Control authorities has been apparent. A fixed price of £6 per ton was guaranteed at the end of last year, the grower to get that sum, even though a lower price had been secured upon the open market. It was agreed that the difference be-

tween the selling-price and the guaranteed price would be made up from public funds. This agreement, like so many others, has been shamelessly broken. At first £6 was fixed as the minimum selling price to absolve the Food Authorities from their financial guarantee. This did not work. They then decided that only large growers should get the subvention; small growers might sell at what price they could, but the difference would not be made up. It was a striking example of "to those that have it shall be given." Unless potatoes were sold in lots of 4 tons or over, the £6 per ton guarantee could not be realised. Our farmers are nearly all small farmers, and upon the present average yields of potatoes in Ireland, 4 tons represents the produce of two-thirds of an acre. The net result is that potatoes are being held up or are being fed to animals. So we must pay 10d. per stone for potatoes. The obvious thing would have been to stand by the guarantee, and to work through the farmers' co-operative societies, to which 120,000 of our small farmers belong. Sooner or later this must be done; we must have it sooner rather than later if privation and want are not to be prevalent in our towns and cities during this winter. Intelligence is not a bureaucrat's strong point; we must supply it.

The cost of living has increased by 106 per cent. in little over three years. In no case have wages increased in the same ratio. The average man thinks when he reads of an increase of 5s. or 10s per week to the worker, that the working classes must now be living in affluence. The very reverse is the fact; but we must say that the "respectable" clerical worker, who is afraid of trade unionism, has not any of our sympathy. He is having a bad time, but he deserves it so long as he suffers it willingly and continues to kiss the boot that kicks him. Such an increase in the cost of living is on the whole quite unnecessary. There is almost as much food available as in pre-war days. But the shipping ring has seen to it that we must pay for the privileges we have given to them. They have increased shipping rates from 300 to 500 per cent. above pre-war rates. Well could Mr. Bonar Law talk some time ago about his profits! To the worker, such profits represent a tightening of his belt or a closer trade union organisation. The excess profits' tax—hailed at one time with delight—is now seen to be a fraud also. The tax has been utilised to force prices higher and higher in a tremendous rush after the greatest possible profit. To us in Ireland the problem largely represents an effort to hold and distribute equitably and cheaply the produce of our land. In 1847-48 thousands of our people died of starvation in the midst of plenty. Our people died, aye! even ate each other, while the produce of their own land and their own labour was taken out of the country. Seventy years ago we had that horrible object lesson in *laissez faire*. Are we willing to repeat that? Is it possible that history has no meaning for us? If so, our writing, our warning is vain. We do not think it is, however. The famine has burned itself into the memory of our race. We think it is only necessary to point out the conditions of '48 to stir our people into action. We must make it very clear that we in Ireland think Irish produce is primarily for Irish needs. Then the spectre may pass from our country.

## Labour in Ireland.

### DUBLIN NOTES.

Last week saw the settlement of the last two big sections of the Dublin wages movement—the Dockers and Carters. The Carters have got an increase of 5s. (15s. on pre-war rates), with regulation of hours, meal hours, and overtime. The Dockers (constant) have got 4s. increase, or 48s. for a 58 hour week (18s. over pre-war rates), with overtime at 1s. an hour, and meal hours provided for. It is pleasant to see this admission by provision of meal hours that Dockers and Carters are human beings, not money-making machines. There are still some sections whose rates are in dispute. The Theatrical Workers have sent in demands to all the Theatres for improvements in pay and conditions for every branch of their work. The replies are still awaited. The Drapers' Porters' demands have been mostly met, but a few firms are still holding out and being followed up in consequence.

On Tuesday, 11th inst., the Committee charged with the framing of rules and procedure for a Conciliation Board for Dublin met in the Mansion House, and continued the discussion of ways and means. On Sunday 8th, a large meeting representing the Trades in Kingstown and Bray was held at the Trades Hall, Bray, at which the new organising scheme of the Trades Congress and Irish Labour Party was fully explained by Messrs. T. Johnston, Belfast; and Wm. O'Brien, Secretary Dublin Trades Council. The progressive spirit at present stirring the ranks of Labour was shown at a meeting of the Tailors' Society, held on Wednesday 12th, in the Trades Hall, Capel street, when the two Dublin Branches were united in one, and Thos. Lawlor, P.L.G., was appointed by election as Organising Secretary. The greatest sign of Progress visible, even in these days, was shown on Friday, 14th inst., when the National Teachers assembled in the Trades Hall to discuss the Government White Paper on the Distribution Grant: with the President of the Trades Council in the chair. They displayed anything but the old spirit of respectful remonstrance, and showed they fully realised that nothing could be got but by militant solidarity with other workers. Mr. P. J. Quinn put the case for the teachers very ably. After dealing with the Government proposals in general, he showed their effect in his own case by saying that if he waited and kept good till next April he would then be entitled to 45s., or 2 loaves of bread and a box of matches per week.

This brings us to the Food Question, which is receiving a lot of the Trades' representatives attention at the present time. A Labour meeting was announced for Beresford Place on Sunday 16th, but a furious blizzard which raged all day utterly prevented it being held. The extreme urgency of the situation demands the close co-operation of all Irish representative bodies towards a solution of the problem of supply if all the work and sacrifices of the past are not to be

nullified by starvation and hunger-scription.

That great old fighter in the cause of Freedom, Mrs. Despard, spoke in the Foresters' Hall on the new franchise legislation, on Friday, 7th inst., but her fine address charmed and instructed an audience much smaller than the occasion warranted. The enemies of Freedom ignored her naturally, but the friends of Freedom did not rise to the level of their duty. We are still in that stage in Ireland when we run after personalities rather than ideas, and our somewhat raw Democracy prefers the sight or company of some famous person to the selected wisdom of any one, however useful, on whom the halo of fame has not descended. Not the study of a subject, but the "being there" when it is discussed by an admitted authority is what counts in Ireland.

### BELFAST NOTES.

The Belfast dockers (Irish Transport Workers) have another win to their credit. About seven hundred men were stopped work on grain ships for three or four days. At the end of that time they received an advance equal to 30 per cent. on piece rates, and work was resumed.

Demands have been sent in by the "black squad" (boilermakers) for an equivalent to the 12½ per cent. advance recently granted to the engineers and other time workers. The employers have mentioned 7½ per cent., but it is expected that the full 12½ per cent. will be conceded.

The First Lord of the Admiralty says: "We must have ships, more ships, and still more ships. We have got the steel and I want the men." For the past six months and at the present time shipbuilders, caulkers, riveters, etc., are working only about half to three-quarters of their limit owing to want of material. It is hoped that if "we have got the steel," a sufficient quantity will be available for Irish shipyards to keep the men fully employed.

The Amalgamated Association of Tramway and Vehicle Workers (Belfast Branch) have made the following application to the Belfast Carriers and Horse-owners' Association for increased wages and overtime:—The hours of employment to be ten for the first five days of the week and five on Saturdays, time to count from entering stable till leaving. Overtime, time and a half; double time for Sundays and holidays, including stable duty. Wages, single horse 46s. per week, teams 56s. per week. Six holidays in the year with pay. No non-union men to be employed when a member of this society is available. These conditions to come into operation as from 1st January, 1918, and be terminated by either party giving the other one month's notice in writing.

### CORK NOTES.

It was satisfactory to learn at last week's meeting of the Trades and Labour Council that Lord Mayor Butterfield and his U.I.L. caucus are not to be permitted

to appoint all the members of the local Food Control Committee. Those who know the caucus in Cork know that the Lord Mayor is more to be pitied than blamed. The workers of Cork are now invited to nominate their own representatives, and the wisdom of the Trades Council and the Labour men in the Corporation in refusing to be a party to the Lord Mayor's letter game ought to be noted in other centres.

It is to be hoped that both the Trades Council and the Cork unions will make a big push in the development of the Irish Labour Party's organising and labour representation scheme. So far no great progress has been made in this direction in Cork. Now, who will enrol the first thousand?

Dublin leads again! Dublin Trades Council's decision to adopt the International Labour Day, May 1st, as the workers' own holiday sets a bold headline to the rest of the country. Cork will surely follow Dublin's good example, and declare May 1st a general holiday. The unions should discuss the question now, and prepare for a brilliant outing. The bosses will shiver at the idea, of course, but the bosses' shivers don't make Cork workers lie awake o' nights nowadays.

The miserable wages paid many girl and women workers in Cork are now getting much needed publicity from the unions. In this campaign the Irish Transport Workers' Union is particularly active. In many firms something approaching a decent wage has been secured by the Union. But one or two firms are reluctant, and they are long notorious for the low wages they pay their girls. In Dobbin, Ogilvie and Co.'s, girls of 17 and 18 years of age are doing men's work for the scandalous wage of 6s. and 7s. per week. The firm has now decided that in view of the action of the employees it will not make any general alterations in the scale of wages. We shall see what we shall see.

In several of the printing firms pretty fair advances have been received. The Eagle Printing Works, however, threatens to reduce the already low wages of the girls employed there, because the girls have joined the Union. But even the eagle may come down to solid earth on occasions.

## WANTED.

IRISH WORKERS to enroll as Agents in the Irish National Assurance Society. Good Commissions Paid.

Apply to

**Eamon O'Duibhir**

(Late of the Hunger Strike Brigade, Mountjoy and Dundalk.)

Divisional Manager, Kilskenane House,

Cashel, Co. Tipperary



# What is A Free Nation.

By the late JAMES CONNOLLY.

What is a free nation? A free nation is one which possesses absolute control over all its own internal resources and powers, and which has no restrictions upon its intercourse with all other nations similarly circumstanced except the restrictions placed upon it by nature. Is that the case of Ireland? If the Home Rule Act were in operation would that be the case of Ireland? To both questions the answer is: No, most emphatically, NO!

A free nation must have complete control over its own harbours, to open them or close them at will, to shut out any commodity, or allow it to enter in, just as it seemed best to suit the well-being of its own people, and in obedience to their wishes, and entirely free of the interference of any other nation, and in complete disregard of the wishes of any other nation. Short of that power no nation possesses the first essentials of freedom.

Does Ireland possess such control? No. Will the Home Rule Act give such control over Irish harbours to Ireland? It will not. Ireland must open its harbours when it suits the interests of another nation—England, and must shut its harbours when it suits the interests of another nation—England, and the Home Rule Act pledges Ireland to accept this loss of national control for ever.

That is the condition of Ireland to-day, and will be the condition of Ireland under Redmond and Devlin's Home Rule Act.

A free nation must have full power to

nurse industries to health, either by government encouragement or by government prohibition of the sale of goods of foreign rivals. It may be foolish to do either, but a nation is not free unless it has that power, as all free nations in the world have to-day.

Ireland has no such power—will have no such power under Home Rule. The nourishing of industries in Ireland hurts capitalists in England: therefore this power is expressly withheld from Ireland.

A free nation must have full power to alter, amend, or abolish, or modify the laws under which the property of its citizens is held, in obedience to the demand of its own citizens for any such alteration, amendment, abolition, or modification.

Every free nation has that power. Ireland does not have it, and is not allowed it by the Home Rule Act.

It is recognised to-day that it is upon the wise treatment of economic power and resources, and upon the wise ordering of social activities that the future of the nation depends. That nation will be the richest and happiest which has the foresight to most carefully marshal its natural resources to national ends. But Ireland is denied this power, and will be denied it under Home Rule. Ireland's rich natural resources, and the kindly genius of its children, are not to be allowed to combine for the satisfaction of Irish wants, save in so far as their combination can operate on lines approved of

by the rulers of England.

Her postal service, her telegraphs, her wireless, her customs and excise, her coinage, her fighting forces, her relations with other nations, her merchant commerce, her property relations, her national activities, her legislative sovereignty—all, all, the things that are essential to a nation's freedom are denied to Ireland now, and are denied to her under the provisions of the Home Rule Act.

As the separate individual is to the family, so the separate nation is to humanity. The perfect family is that which best draws out the inner powers of the individual; the most perfect world is that in which the separate existence of nations is held most sacred.

There can be no perfect Europe in which Ireland is denied even the least of its national rights; there can be no worthy Ireland whose children brook tamely such denial.

If such denial has been accepted by soulless slaves of politicians, then it must be repudiated by Irish men and women whose souls are still their own.

The peaceful progress of the future requires the possession by Ireland of all the national rights now denied to her. Only in such possession can the workers of Ireland see stability and security for the fruits of their toil and organisation. —("Workers' Republic," 12th Feb., 1916.)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS—Continued.

### More Hunger Strikes.

We are glad to give publicity to the following case concerning the imprisonment of a good Labour man, well known in Trade Union circles in Belfast.

Mr. H. E. Fieldhouse, 51 Sandown Road, Strandtown, Belfast, is the father of 10 children. Nearly twenty years ago he secured exemption from vaccination for two of them while living in England. Removing to Ireland he was prosecuted for the next five children and fined for not having them vaccinated, there being no exemption under the Irish Vaccination Acts. A child was born to Mr. Fieldhouse a few months ago and in due course he was prosecuted by the Belfast Guardians and fined the usual 20s. and costs for refusing to have it vaccinated. This time Mr. Fieldhouse determined to make a definite protest. He refused to pay the fine and decided that if he were imprisoned in default he would "hunger strike." On Saturday last (December 1st), at 7.45 p.m., Mr. Fieldhouse arrived in gaol. He started "hunger striking" at once, and at dinner time next day he told the warder that he did not intend to eat anything, and it was useless bring-

ing any food to him. The master of the prison visited him 1½ hours afterwards, and asked him not to injure his health. Mr. Fieldhouse pointed out that he was acting in this way as a protest against the unjust vaccination laws; he had protested in a constitutional way all his life; paying fines was useless, as the guardians were perfectly content with this method of obeying the law. The master went away and the next day brought the Governor to see Mr. Fieldhouse. He repeated what he had said to the master and added that he was sorry to give trouble, but the board of guardians must take responsibility. He further told the Governor that he was a plater at Messrs. Harland and Wolff's, and that if he did not go into work the following day a squad of men would have to remain idle, and he pointed out that Sir Edward Carson had been to Belfast asking for ships and yet more ships, while the guardians were willing to keep him idle for fourteen days. The Governor remarked that they had instructions to let him out under the Cat and Mouse Act, and pointed out that it would take him six months to complete his term of fourteen days if he adopted that procedure. Mr.

Fieldhouse suggested to the Governor that he might do his sentence in two parts, having made the same suggestion to the doctor 1½ hours earlier. The Governor remarked that they must go according to the law.

On Tuesday, December 4th, the warder came in and told Mr. Fieldhouse that the Governor wanted to see him. At the office a letter from the Lord Lieutenant was read, stating that Mr. Fieldhouse was to be discharged absolutely from that day. On Mr. Fieldhouse thanking those concerned for their considerate treatment, he was asked if he would have something to eat, and after considerable pressure he consented to take a glass of warm milk. He was also asked if he could get home alone.

Mr. Fieldhouse has in this way won a complete victory for our cause, and the council trust that other defaulters in Ireland will be able to follow his example. Boards of guardians would not be so anxious to prosecute defaulters under the Vaccination Acts if they realised that no money would be forthcoming in fines and costs. The Scottish anti-vaccinists won the measure of freedom they now enjoy by resolutely refusing to pay fines. Nearly

all the defaulters under the Vaccination Act in that country suffered imprisonment at one time or another. In England there have been hundreds of imprisonments in default of payment of fines or distraint of goods, and it is this kind of protest that ultimately brings freedom.

L. LOAT, Secretary,  
Anti-Vaccination League.

#### AGRICULTURAL WAGES BOARD, IRELAND.

The attention of employers of agricultural labour is drawn to the fact that the above Board, by Order dated the 10th November, 1917, and published in all the daily papers and a large number of provincial papers in Ireland, fixed a minimum scale of wages for male workmen over 21 years of age, and female workmen over 18 years of age.

The Board understand some employers of labour are not complying with their Order, and they desire to direct attention to Section 4 (1) of the Corn Production Act, which is as follows:—

"(4).—(1) Any person who employs a workman in Agriculture shall pay wages to the workman at a rate not less than the minimum rate as fixed under this Act and applicable to the case, and if he fails to do so, shall be liable on summary conviction in respect of each offence to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds, and to a fine not exceeding one pound for each day on which the offence is continued after conviction therefor."

If the Board's Order is not complied with, they will be reluctantly obliged to take proceedings against defaulters.

Any person requiring a copy of the Order can have same on application to the Secretary, Agricultural Wages Board, 14 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

J. C. NOLAN FERRALL,  
Secretary.

19th Dec., 1917.

#### AGRICULTURAL WAGES BOARD FOR IRELAND.

For the purpose of carrying into effect the Board's Order of the 10th November, 1917, fixing minimum rates of wages for certain classes of agricultural workmen in Ireland, the Board require, in cases where agreements have been arrived at between employers and their workmen as to the value of allowances and perquisites, that copies of these agreements should be forwarded to the Board for their information.

J. C. NOLAN FERRALL,  
Secretary.

14 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin,  
19th Dec., 1917

## Allotments and Garden Plots.

The question of the education of plot-holders on gardening matters is a problem which the Irish Plotters' Union have rightly taken cognisance of. The problem is not an easy one. Plotters in many cases are not as ignorant of gardening matters as the "expert" pretends, and in other cases there are numbers who know, or think they do, more than any gardener under the sun.

Mr. J. Weathers (an Irishman), late Horticultural Instructor to the Middlesex County Council, in his book on School, Cottage, and Allotment Gardening, states of this class of plot-holder in England:—"I have seen men on allotments trying to dig ground, plant potatoes, and pick out the roots of bindweed all at the same time. The work has been hurried and scurried over; not a single row has been in a straight line, and the 'slap-dash' methods adopted have produced slap-dash results. It is practically impossible to tender advice to men who 'work' in this silly fashion. They simply will not take it; they already know all about it, and they look at you with a sort of: 'You can't teach me nothing,' kind of air." Despite the above statements there appears to be an increasing tendency amongst plotters to desire advice as to what they should plant and how they should prepare for the planting.

In England the Food Production Department, realising that allotments can do something in the way of food production and that intelligent cultivation will produce more than indifferent methods, have arranged for (1) Lectures by a staff of twenty experts selected by the Royal Horticultural Society; (2) Lectures on potato disease, and the results of this year's spraying, by members of the staff of the Food Production Department; (3) Demonstrations in drying and other methods of preserving fruit and vegetables. Much work has also been done by soldiers around the various military camps; and in this connection the Commanding Officers have asked for lectures to be given during the winter to the men engaged in cultivation; while numbers of lectures have been given under the auspices of various county and local organisations.

In Ireland very little seems to have been done in the matter; during the spring and summer months a few Instructors were appointed, but these were dismissed in September, just at the time when they might have been doing especially useful work demonstrating and advising and lecturing in preparation for next season's crops. There are rumours to the effect that the Treasury have sat on this Irish scheme of instruction, just as they sat on portions of the L.G.B. scheme last season. One cannot for a moment think that the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction believes in the kind of gardening which starts on Good Friday or St. Patrick's

Day and finishes on Michaelmas Day.

A few lectures have been arranged by the Vacant Land Cultivation Society, and some also by local authorities; these are reported to have been well attended. But so far there does not appear to have been any real organised effort to arrange for the winter instruction of plotters, or to stimulate local authorities towards obtaining more land for the season now begun. There should be much work for last season's instructors to do, in reporting on ground suitable for allotments, drawing up schemes for and supervising the planning of the same, and in giving lectures to both last year's plotters and this season's would-be plotters.

Reports to hand indicate that many who fought shy of the plots last season are demanding them now, and that the demand for ground is insistent, while the offers of suitable ground by landowners are practically non-existent.

#### WORK FOR THE WEEK.

Potato Sprouting.—During the Xmas holidays, time may be found for putting potato "seeds" or sets to sprout, in order to get good results for next season. First of all, obtain reliable "seed" from a district to the north of that in which it is intended to grow them—the farther north the better, as a general rule. The seed or tubers should weigh about 2 ozs. on the average.

If new sets were obtained last year it should be possible to get good results from medium-sized sets selected from those which are now stored in clamps or boxes, etc. Having obtained the tubers, also shallow boxes, or special potato sprouting boxes, place the potatoes with the rose or bud end upwards, so that the young shoots or sprouts as they come out from the "eyes" of the potato are at the uppermost part of the potato. The potatoes should be placed quite close to each other (a single layer in each box), and the box should then be placed in the dark until sprouts or shoots begin to show. As soon as these are about a quarter of an inch long—not more—the boxes should be placed where they will get full light and air—but kept away from frost—when the shoots will be dwarf and sturdy, and more liable to give heavy crops than those developed all the time in the dark. Crops to Grow, and Scheme of Cropping—I hope to deal with these in the next issue, and if space allows, to give a plan showing quantities of seeds necessary, etc.

I hope also in a future issue to deal with the amount of food which can be produced on an allotment. One hears of various estimates from time to time in terms of money value, which are apt to be misleading; it has been stated that a Dublin plotter has produced £20 worth on his plot for this season, but with vegetables at fancy prices this figure conveys little in the way of food production information.

PLOTHOLDER.

To Our Readers

## GREETING.

Once again we celebrate Christmas beneath the horrible shadow of war, but  
 :: even under such ghastly conditions we wish all our readers

*A Happy Christmas.*

*Christmas Poem.*

## A FATHER IN EXILE.

(By James Connolly, 1903.)

'Tis Christmas Day in Ireland, and I am sitting here alone,  
 Three thousand miles of ocean intervene;  
 And the faces of my loved ones in my little Irish home,  
 Come glancing in and out my thoughts between.

Oh, to catch the loving kisses from my little children  
 flung,  
 To feel the warm embrace when wife and husband meet,  
 To hear the boisterous greeting in the kindly Dublin  
 tongue,  
 That makes brightness of the dulness of our murky  
 Dublin street.

'Tis Christmas Day in Ireland, and I, my lot bewailing,  
 Am fretting in this western land, so cold,  
 Where the throbbings of the human heart are weak and  
 unavailing,  
 And human souls are reckoned less than gold.

Oh, the headache, and the heartache, and the ashes of  
 the feast,  
 Attend us every hour of our sojourn in this land,  
 Till the heart-sick Irish exile turns his face toward the  
 east,  
 To the land where love and poverty can wander hand  
 in-hand.

'Tis Christmas Day in Ireland, and ringing over yonder,  
 Are Dublin streets with Irish love of life,  
 And I here in exile moping, in spirit yearnings wander  
 To that Irish land to meet my Irish wife.

Oh, the lovings, and the strivings, and the griefs we  
 shared in common,  
 And the babes that came to bless us as sweet buds upon  
 a tree;  
 Oh, curses on the cruel fate that sent a father roaming,  
 And blessings still this Christmas-tide my Irish home  
 on thee.

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