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IRELAND'S PERIL

BY
REV. E. CAHILL, S.J.

Published for AN RÍOGHÁCHT
(The League of the Kingship of Christ)

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AN RIOGHACHT

(LEAGUE OF THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST)

AN RIOGHACHT was founded in Dublin on the day of the first celebration of the Feast of Jesus Christ the King, October 31st, 1926. The name *An Rioghacht* (the Kingdom or the Kingship) indicates the purpose of the League, which is to assist in the work of re-establishing the Social Reign of Christ the King in Irish public life. Its immediate objects are:—

- (a) To propagate among the Irish people a better knowledge of Catholic Social principles;
- (b) To strive for the effective recognition of these principles in Irish public life;
- (c) To promote Catholic Social action.

The members, who must be all practical Catholics, are expected to work for these objects without seeking any personal advantage.

The League, while taking for granted the principles of Irish nationality, is not associated with any political party, and takes no part in political controversy or activities, except when and in so far as the immediate objects of the League (*viz.*, Catholic Social interests) are involved.

The meetings of the League begin and end with prayer. The business may be conducted either in Irish or English; but the public prayers are always said in Irish where possible.

The members are of four grades, *viz.*, *Associates*, who have made a study of Catholic Social principles, and form the central governing body; *Aspirants*, who aim at becoming Associates; *Assistants*, who help in the active work of the League without aspiring to become Associates; and *Juniors* (boys and girls) who are under age for full membership, but aspire to become active members after leaving school, and meanwhile are organised in *School Branches*. These latter are affiliated to the League, but have a constitution and rules of their own.

(Continued on page 3 of Cover.)

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IRELAND'S PERIL

IN Ireland we are confronted with the strange anomaly of a profoundly Catholic nation, devoid of many of the external features of a Catholic civilisation, and suffering from all the material, and very many of the mental defects, which usually result from an un-Christian social *régime*.

Historical Causes of the Abnormal Social Conditions.

Historical causes account in large measure for this phenomenon. Between the middle of the sixteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the religious, educational and economic organisation of the country was completely broken up,¹ and nearly all the landed property was transferred from the Catholic Irish into the hands of the Protestant planters. The work of destruction was completed in the nineteenth century, when the Irish language, with all the wealth of Catholic tradition which it enshrined, was all but destroyed. The famines and "clearances," and the consequent expatriation of the greater part of the Catholic rural population, finally broke the old Irish Catholic tradition, and practically severed the Irish nation from its past. While the new social system took definite shape during the nineteenth century, the Protestant minority controlled the property and the industries of the country. They enjoyed a monopoly of the social prestige. Except for the Catholic clergy, they included the only educated class. The civil and municipal administration, as well as the framing of the laws, was in their hands. The new system of education, which was introduced under their *régime*, was framed under the influence of the un-Catholic and un-Irish ideals of Trinity College,

¹ See the "Irish Messenger" pamphlet, *Ireland and the Kingship of Christ* (price 2d.), pp. 5-6.

De licentia Superiorum Ordinis :

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DUBLINI, die 19^o Maii, anno 1930.

and founded on the basis of un-Christian Liberalism. The English literature, whose general tone and spirit, where they are not those of Liberalism, are saturated with anti-Catholic prejudice, became the principal medium of education and instruction.

Hence, while the Irish people are, for the most part, devotedly Catholic, in practice as well as belief, the character of the social system which has been forced upon them is neither Catholic nor Irish. It is a product of the English domination; and is fashioned after an English Protestant model. In this respect the position of the Irish nation differs profoundly from that of the Catholic populations of Italy and Spain, and the more or less Catholic countries of Continental Europe and South America. In the case of these latter, although they have all felt the effects of the social and political upheavals associated with the French Revolution, and although Masonic and other anti-Christian influences have had their baneful results upon the religious spirit of the people, the old Catholic tradition, even in public life, was never completely broken. Their civilisation and culture still rest very largely on the Christian basis; their best literature and art, the foundation of their legal system are all permeated with the Christian spirit.

It is far otherwise with the countries of the English civilisation, among which modern Ireland must now be reckoned.

"The English-speaking world [writes H. Belloc], its existing institutions, its ideals in law and administration, spring from the English Protestant seventeenth century. Its literature and its morals repose on that foundation. Indeed, for the majority of its citizens, no other state of affairs has been experienced, none other is conceivable."²

Obstacles to Reconstruction.

Hence, for a nation like Ireland, which now practically belongs to the English civilisation and culture, and in which the framework of the social organism has been largely de-Christianised, a return to Catholic standards in public life is a much more complicated process than for the

² *The Church To-day*, chap. v.

Continental countries, or at least for those of them in which the bulk of the people still remain practical Catholics.

Another element of difficulty in the case of Ireland is no less serious. The Irish people, as they exist to-day, are only a remnant of a small Catholic nation, which is enveloped on all sides by an immense English-speaking world, predominantly un-Catholic or un-Christian. To save this Catholic nation, or what survives of it, from final absorption into the larger and more powerful body, would in any case be an arduous task. The many ties—political, economical, cultural, and even racial (for the greater part of the Irish race now live in the United States of America and the British Colonies) binding the modern Irish nation to the English-speaking world, serve to increase the difficulty and the danger.

Besides all this, there are forces at work in the very heart of the Irish nation itself that tend to weaken its power of resistance and recovery. The partition of the country by England into two separate States, one of which, containing a large section of the old Catholic population, is dominated politically and economically by the Protestant party, is one outstanding source of weakness. Even in the Irish Free State, where the Catholic Irish form more than 92 per cent. of the population, the anti-Catholic and anti-Irish forces closely allied with international Freemasonry,³ are very strongly organised, and are supported by the whole weight of British influence. On the other hand, there is little Catholic organisation, except for purely religious purposes. A large section of the economic and intellectual life of the Free State is dominated by the non-Catholic minority. This is true of the Dublin University, which is by far the richest and most highly-endowed educational institution in the country. It is true also of the Royal Dublin Society, of most of the public libraries, and of many of the other academic and professional institutions. Most even of the larger commercial and manufacturing organisations, the more important banks, most of the Insurance Companies, the

³ Cf. *Freemasonry and the Anti-Christian Movement*, by Rev. E. Cahill, S.J. (Gill, Dublin: 2nd Ed., 1930.) See Index, under words "Anglo-Irish F. . ."

railways, the shipping companies, etc., are controlled by the non-Catholic party, and are managed in non-Catholic or English interests.⁴ The Irish Catholic labourers, who are probably the very best Catholics of their class in Europe, are organised under what is largely non-Catholic leadership, and with a purely secular programme. Large numbers belong to or are affiliated with British Labour unions, which are predominantly non-Catholic and more or less Socialistic. Communistic propagandists are busy among them in many places. Besides all this, several associations, which are secularist if not Masonic, such as Rotarians, Buffaloes, Boy Scouts, etc., are beginning to interpenetrate our Catholic men and youth.

Prevalence of False Principles.

Again, un-Christian principles and ideals, resulting from a non-Catholic social environment too often receive recognition and support even among practical Catholics. Thus, false ideas are afloat on the real meaning of ownership, and the duties attaching to property rights; on the duties and rights of civil government; on the due relations between Church and State; on duties and rights regarding education, etc. How many excellent Catholics are to be found who are completely ignorant of the Catholic principles which dominate the question of usury, and personal labour, or fail to realise that the ownership of property is a stewardship, which the owner is bound to exercise in accordance with the principles of social Justice, Charity and Patriotism. In the same way false ideas of liberty and democracy are too often championed, even by Catholics. Thus, the proposition (which is a principal of un-Christian Liberalism) is sometimes defended, that religion and religious considerations must be kept out of public life, or that the civil government should not interfere with the liberty of the subject, even when the latter is circulating ideas subversive of morality or of the true religion, or when, in the pursuit of unholy gain, he is indirectly propagating the vices of intemperance, gambling or unchastity.

⁴ *Ib.*, pp. 26-7, 44-6.

Summary of the Social Evils.

The prevalence of un-Christian principles in public life, and the dominating position of the non-Catholic and un-Christian forces in the country lie at the root of the worst social evils that afflict Ireland to-day. The widespread and excessive poverty, side by side with extravagance and luxury; the restlessness and disinclination for serious work that now affect almost all classes; the universal craze for pleasure and excitement; the ceaseless emigration from an already under-populated country;⁵ the enforced idleness of multitudes in presence of abundant natural resources, which are left undeveloped; the uncultivated lands; the neglected fisheries; the dwindling population, are all rooted in an unnatural and un-Christian social régime. The same applies to the destructive betting and gambling activities now actively propagated by the Press and other agencies to the remotest parts even of the rural districts, the multiplication of debasing amusements, the obscuring of the Catholic tradition regarding the safeguarding of Christian modesty. These and such like evils, which now threaten the very life-springs of the nation, would never have reached their present proportions among such a profoundly Catholic people as the majority of the Irish people are, if the social organisation were normal or formed upon a Christian basis.

To grapple effectually with the social question in Ireland, a new social system, organised on Christian principles, must

⁵ Ireland, although one of the richest countries of Europe in the fertility of her soil and other natural advantages, is the most sparsely populated of all European countries, except Scandinavia and parts of Southern Spain. The following table, taken from the *Census of the Irish Free State; Preliminary Report, 1926*, page 6, will be of interest in this connexion:—

POPULATION, PER SQUARE MILE, OF SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES:					
England and Wales	649	Scotland	161
Belgium	635	Ireland:—		
Holland	545	The Free State	112
Italy (pre-war area)	338	The six N.E. Counties	240
Germany	328	Spain	110
Czecho-Slovakia	251	Sweden	34
Denmark	197	Norway	21
France	184			

be gradually built up; and it is at this objective that the social reformer should aim. There are, however, certain details of outstanding and urgent danger that require immediate attention. These are the questions of emigration and urbanism, the problem of the Gaeltacht, the betting evil, the un-Christian Press and Cinema, and the absence of Catholic industrial organisation. We treat briefly of each in order.

I.—EMIGRATION

The evil of emigration is of such importance in the Irish social question, threatening as it does, the very existence of the Irish nation, that emigration may be at present regarded as the central social evil in Ireland, in reference to which almost every other public question has to be considered. An abnormal and unnatural⁶ or forced emigration has been a social evil in Ireland ever since the ill-starred Flight of the Earls in the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is only since the middle of the nineteenth century, however, that the evil has attained the proportions of a national exodus. Nothing so well illustrates the deplorable condition to which misgovernment and social injustice have reduced the nation.

Exodus of the Irish Nation.

The number of Irish emigrants since 1847 would reach a total of about one and a-half the present population of Ireland. While the population of every other country in Europe has increased, and in the case of many has been doubled or trebled, during the last eighty years, that of Ireland, which is one of the richest of all in natural resources,

⁶ We call emigration unnatural and abnormal when large numbers of the inhabitants go into exile to seek a livelihood, while the natural resources of their own country are amply sufficient, if properly exploited, to provide for the whole population. The emigration of a surplus population from an over-populated country is not unnatural or abnormal.

has been reduced to about half of what it was in 1847, and, probably, to much less than one-third or one-fourth of the number that the country could, in normal conditions, easily maintain.⁷

Of the Irish-born men and women now living, about one-third are in exile. According to censuses taken about the years 1920-21 in U.S.A., and the different countries of the British Empire to which the Irish exiles usually go, there were at least 1,817,457 Irish-born persons living outside of Ireland at that time. In other words, the number of Irish exiles was about 43 per cent. of the home population. It is certain, that with the increased rate of emigration, the number has grown considerably since then. This makes the case of Ireland quite unique among the countries of the world. Norway, whose number of exiles is about 14 per cent. of the home population, is the nearest approach to Ireland.⁸ Even at present, and for some years past, notwithstanding the yearly decrease in the population, the annual toll of exiles from Ireland (over 40,000) is much higher than the average emigration figures between 1893 and 1923.⁹

⁷ Cf. G. O'Brien: *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (Longmans, 1921), pp. 74-86 and passim. On the showing of Dr. O'Brien it would appear that the land of Ireland could easily maintain more than four times its present population on agriculture alone.

⁸ The following table, arranged from figures given in the *Preliminary Report of Census of Free State, 1926* (pp. 8-9), illustrates the unique position of Ireland in regard to emigration. The figures represent the number of exiles from each country as per cent. of the home population:—

COUNTRY OF BIRTH, AND NUMBER OF EXILES AS PER CENT. OF THE HOME POPULATION:			
France	0.5	Italy	8.4
Belgium	1.0	England and Wales	6.3
Holland	2.1	Scotland	14.1
Germany	2.9	Norway	14.8
Spain	5.2	Ireland	43.0

⁹ Cf. Emigration figures given in *The Irish Catholic Directory, 1923*, page 1; also *Preliminary Report of the Census of Irish Free State, 1926*, page 6. The totals of the present annual emigration

Ruinous Results of the Exodus.

When we bear in mind that over 85 per cent. of these emigrants leave Ireland between the ages of seventeen and forty-five, and that about 80 per cent. are drawn from the agricultural population,¹⁰ we can understand something of the disastrous results of such a drain. First, there is the purely economic loss. It is estimated that a full-grown healthy man or woman normally represents in merely economic

from Ireland are *not contained in any of the official publications*, as they used to be prior to 1922. The figures actually published during the past seven years refer only to the emigration to *countries outside of Europe*, and do not include, as they formerly did, the very considerable yearly emigration to Great Britain. The emigration from all Ireland to countries outside Europe for the three years—1926-1928 (the latest available) are as follows: In the year 1926 the emigration from the Free State to places outside Europe was 28,376; that from the six Northern Counties was 11,557—making a total of 39,933 emigrants from all Ireland to countries outside Europe. The corresponding figures for 1927 are somewhat smaller, being 25,255, 10,267 and 35,322, respectively, and those for 1928, being 21,910, 8,599 and 30,509. The emigration to Great Britain during these years has not been published; but it may be roughly estimated from the following facts: The yearly emigration to Great Britain during the decade 1901-1910 was 11,800 (figures kindly supplied by the Department of Industry and Commerce), and during the years 1911-1926 averaged 14,653 (*Preliminary Report*, page 7). Furthermore, of all the Irish persons living in exile in 1921 (1,817,457) nearly one-third (526,767) were living in Great Britain. Hence, it may be assumed that at present the yearly net emigration from Ireland to Great Britain is *over* 10,000, so that this figure *at least* must be added to the emigration figures given above, in order to obtain, approximately, the true yearly emigration. Hence, the following tabulation will convey a succinct idea of the present state of the emigration question, as far as it can be gathered from the inadequate figures published:—

YEARS	ANNUAL EMIGRATION	
1891-1900 43,352	} Average for the ten years (Cf. <i>Thom's Directory</i> .)
1901-1910 34,906	
1911-1925 33,468	
1926 49,993	
1927 45,322	(viz., 35,322+10,000)
1928 40,509	(viz., 30,509+10,000)

¹⁰ Cf. Lists in *Irish Catholic Directory*, 1929, pp. lx-lxi.

value to the nation anything between £300 and £600. This calculation is based mainly upon the estimated average cost of the maintenance and education of a child up to the age of maturity. For if the young man or woman leaves the country before paying back in labour the cost of his or her upbringing, the home country suffers a positive loss, and the country to which the exile migrates gains a proportionate amount. Thus, one easily sees how serious a drain upon the resources of the State would be a yearly tribute to another State of, say, 40,000 full-grown young horses. Yet, the cost of the upbringing of a child to the age of maturity is very much greater than that of any of the lower animals. On the estimates given above, the yearly emigration from Ireland of some 40,000 of the best and most vigorous of her sons and daughters would represent, in mere economic loss, an annual drain upon the national resources of anything between £12,000,000 and £24,000,000! The sums sent home every year by the exiled Irish (although a certain recoupment as far as they go) represent at most only a *very small* fraction of this yearly loss.

The economic loss is not, however, the principal one. The physical health and strength of the home population must, necessarily, be depressed to a lower standard owing to the constant drawing off of so many of the best of the younger generation. The people's interests tend to be diverted from their own country. Energy, enthusiasm and the spirit of joyousness and hope so essential to the nation's welfare are damped, and discouragement and pessimism tend to prevail.

The Low Marriage and Birth-rates.

Another result of the abnormal emigration is that the marriage rate in Ireland is *much less than half* the normal marriage rate of the other European countries. According to censuses taken in twenty-one different European countries during the years 1900 to 1911, Ireland presents a strange and very striking contrast with every other European country in the small percentage of the married men. The figures refer to men between the ages of 25 and 34. Of the total

number of men of that age living in ten different countries, the following percentages were married:—

	Per cent.		Per cent.
In Serbia	84.1	In England and Wales ..	60.6
In Spain	72.1	In Austria	60.1
In France	65.0	In Scotland	51.4
In Germany	63.3	In Sweden	49.9
In Italy	63.1	In Ireland	29.2

The unnatural and unwholesome conditions and economic stagnation which such a low marriage rate implies and intensifies, need not be emphasised. As a result of the low marriage rate, the birth-rate (about 21 per 1,000) although fair in proportion to the marriage rate,¹² is, absolutely speaking, one of the lowest in the world.¹³ The present writer knows at least one rural parish in the South of Ireland, which is probably more or less typical, in which *four-fifths of the land* is at present in the hands of owners *who have no direct heirs*, namely, of childless men and women, who are either unmarried or have married late in life! Hence, the population is steadily declining. Between 1841 and 1926 it had fallen from 8,196,547 to 4,229,124. A year later (1927) it had again declined to 4,208,000, showing a diminution of over 20,000 in one year.¹⁴

Threatened Extinction of the Irish Race.

This exodus of the people and the consequent decline of the home population not alone imperil the existence of the

¹¹ These figures have been kindly supplied by the Department of Industry and Commerce. Since 1921 the marriage rate in Ireland has declined still further.

¹² The birth-rate even in this sense is declining. Whereas, in the Census of 1911, the average number of births per year for every 1,000 married women between 20 and 44 years of age was 302, it had fallen in 1926 to about 265. (Figures kindly supplied as an estimate by the Department of Industry and Commerce.)

¹³ The absolute birth-rates in England (16.0), France (18.2) and Switzerland (18.2) are now lower than that of Ireland. The decline in these countries is mainly due to a cause which does not operate or operates comparatively little in a country like Ireland, where the vast majority of the people are practising Catholics.

¹⁴ The actual diminution of the population is, probably, *very much greater* than the official figures here given, in which no account seems to be taken of the yearly emigration to Great Britain.

Irish nation. The practical extinction of the whole Irish race is threatened. The overwhelming majority of the Irish emigrants settle in the cities of America, Britain, and other countries. Here they meet the usual fate of urban populations, practically disappearing within a few generations.

It can be shown by comparative statistics, and is now becoming generally recognised, that the exiled Irish are not increasing at anything like the normal rate, and in fact maintain their numbers only by the constant addition of new supplies from Ireland. In this the Irish present a striking contrast with the Dutch Boers of South Africa and the French Canadians. The latter have grown by mere natural increase in the course of little more than a century and a-half (namely, since 1763, when emigration from France to Canada finally ceased) from 60,000 to about 3½ millions. Although some 5,000,000 immigrant Irish have taken up residence in U.S.A. since 1763, the total number of their descendants to-day would not be more than about 7,000,000, or at most 8,000,000. Again, if the Catholics in England, the vast majority of whom are exiled Irish, had grown by natural increase during the last eighty years at anything like the rate at which the French Canadians or the Boers (or even the rural Irish at home up to some forty years ago), have grown, there would be at least seven or eight million Catholics in England to-day. The root cause of the difference seems to be that whereas the French and the Dutch emigrants settled on the land, the emigrant Irish settle mostly in cities, and are aggregated to the industrial rather than the agricultural population, and so, unlike the rural settlers, the race begins to fail after the first generation.¹⁵

¹⁵ Cf. a series of articles by M. V. Kelly, entitled "The Suicide of the Irish Race," published in *America*, November 17, November 18, and December 1, 1928. On the same subject see in *Studies*, vol. v. (1916) an article by Austin O'Malley, M.D., etc., entitled "The Effects of the American Climate on the European Emigrants," also vol. vii. (1918) an article by the same writer, entitled "Irish Vital Statistics in America"; and, finally, an article by J. J. Walsh, M.D., etc., in the same review, vol. x. (1921), entitled "Irish Mortality in New York and Pennsylvania." The conclusions from these and other writings seem to be that: (a) the actual mortality

II.—URBANISM

The emigration statistics and those of the dwindling population—alarming as they are—do not convey an adequate idea of the perilous social condition of the Irish nation to-day. Side by side with the emigration movement there is a growing tendency among the rural population to abandon the land, and migrate to the towns. Thus, in the twenty-six counties now comprising the Irish Free State, the rural districts have lost *over two-thirds* of their population since 1841. The "country" population of these counties, which was 5,281,000 in 1841, had fallen to 1,878,000 in 1926.¹⁶ Some rural parishes have actually lost more than five-sixths of their population¹⁷ since the middle of the last century. On the other hand, the cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and, twenty-five other towns, have increased in population although their industries have mostly decayed. The increase has been brought about by the absorption of the distributing trade of the smaller towns and villages.

Ruinous Effects of Urbanism.

As a result of this unnatural and abnormal migration of the people into the larger towns, which have no industries to maintain them, the numbers engaged in the distributive

of the Irish in New York (and still more in the other great cities of U.S.A.) is more than double the home mortality, and much higher than that of any other section of the American population; (b) an Irish man or woman sacrifices, on an average, at least ten years of his or her natural life by emigrating to America; and finally (c) the Irish in America are not increasing at anything like the normal rate, and in fact seem doomed to extinction.

¹⁶ *Preliminary Report of the Census*, page 2.

¹⁷ In a census of the parish of Cappagh and Nantenan, Co. Limerick, which was recently taken by the Parish Priest (Rev. P. Woulfe) it was found that the population of the parish, which had been about 4,500 in the year 1841, had fallen to 653 in 1927. There is no reason to regard this case as altogether exceptional. These 4,500 inhabitants of eighty-six years ago were a purely agricultural population; nor were there any deaths from famine in that parish in 1847-48. The land, which half a century ago was mostly under tillage, is now nearly altogether in pasture; and the rural industries which then existed have completely disappeared.

occupations, and the more or less parasitical employments of all kinds, including the two armies of State officials, have grown beyond all proportion. The prices of the necessaries of life are excessive, for besides the fact that an overgrown crowd of middlemen have to be maintained from trading profits, prices especially of bread, milk and meat are too often swollen by arbitrary and unjust profiteering, the effects of which fall especially upon the poor.¹⁸ Immense numbers are unemployed.¹⁹ The housing accommodation is quite inadequate; and extreme poverty, probably unequalled in any other country in Europe, prevails.

Deplorable Conditions of the Urban Population.

Among the evidences of the excessive poverty of the town population of Ireland, perhaps the most striking are the excessive badness of the housing accommodation and the equally excessive high rate of infant mortality. Taking Dublin as an example, we find that the total population of the Borough of Dublin at the last census (1926) was 316,693. Of these, 23,665 families, including 78,920 persons (viz., 27.8 per cent. of the whole), lived in one-room tenements, and 63,458 more lived in two-room tenements. These two classes include more than half the total population!²⁰ Of these dwellings, very many are cellars; and more than 10 per

¹⁸ Cf. Report of the Tribunal on Prices. This Tribunal was set up by the Free State Executive, 1926. See also a valuable series of articles published in *The Nation* (Dublin), 1929, Sept. 7, Sept. 21, and Oct. 12.

¹⁹ There are no reliable figures obtainable of the present extent of unemployment in the Irish Free State. It is admitted, however, by those in the best position to judge (such as those engaged in social or charitable work amongst the poor) that it has reached unprecedented dimensions. Returns from the Labour Exchanges show that the number of unemployed in the six N.E. counties is over 50,000. If the number of unemployed in the Free State bear the same proportion to the population, the total number of unemployed in Ireland would be well over 150,000. Cf. Supplement to *The Nation* (Dublin), Oct. 26, 1929, for a useful summary of the question.

²⁰ *Census of Population—Saorstát Éireann*, 1926, vol. iv, p. 4. (Stationery Office, Dublin, 2/6.)

cent. were declared more than ten years previously to be quite unfit for human habitation. Again, even before 1912, when conditions of unemployment and over-crowding were not nearly as bad as they are at present, more than a thousand children under five years of age died every year in Dublin as a result of insufficient nourishment, deficient clothing, unsanitary housing conditions, etc.²¹ Similar conditions, though not quite so bad, prevail in many other towns throughout Ireland.

Fatal Decay of the Irish Rural Population.

Meanwhile, as the rural districts are becoming deserted, the land, which is the main basis of the economic life of the nation, is steadily going out of cultivation.²² The result of this last movement on the natural prosperity may be gathered from the recognised fact that the food product from uncultivated but arable land is *less than* one-third or one-fourth of what the same land yields by suitable cultivation.²³ In fact, while non-cultivation and rural depopulation react on each other, the intensity of both is in inverse ratio to the degree of national prosperity.²⁴

It is true that the fatal tendency towards urbanism, or desertion of the country for the town, is at present not peculiar to Ireland. Thus, France has now only 48 per cent.

²¹ This is according to the Report drawn up (1912) by Sir Charles Cameron, who was Medical Superintendent Officer of Health in Dublin for thirty-five years. Cf. *Poverty in Dublin*, by J. B. Hughes (*Irish Messenger* series). *Poverty in Cork*, by Rev. A. McSweeney, O.P. (University and Labour Series); also *Poverty—A Study of Town Life*, by G. Rowntree (Macmillan, London, 1902). See also *Census of Population*, 1926, vol. iv.

²² The cultivated area of the twenty-six counties of the Free State, which was in round numbers 3,509,000 statute acres in 1851, had dwindled to 1,551,447 statute acres in 1926—being in the latter year less by about 100,000 acres than in 1909, which was the lowest record previously reached. Cf. *Agricultural Statistics*, compiled for the Department of Industry and Commerce (Stationery Office, Dublin, 1928. Price 2/6), pp. xxix, xxx-xxxii.

²³ Cf. *Labour and Agriculture*, page 10 ("Labour Policy Pamphlets," Dublin, 32 Lower Abbey Street, 1926).

²⁴ Cf. *The Social Question in Ireland*, by Rev. P. Coffey (C.T.S. of Ireland, 1919).

of the total population engaged in agriculture; Germany about 35 per cent., and England probably less than 6 per cent. What makes Ireland's case unique is the fact that agriculture is practically her only surviving industry. Hence, the burden of maintaining the overgrown town population has to be borne principally by the dwindling body of agriculturists. At present, considerably less than three-quarters of a million of people in the Free State—male and female—including boys and girls under eighteen years of age, are engaged in agriculture,²⁵ while the total population is little short of three millions. Hence, seeing that agriculture is practically the only productive industry, the land, which is largely uncultivated, has to maintain more than three times the number of people employed upon it. Again, since town families do not usually survive beyond the third generation, even when they have plenty of work, food and housing, which they have not in Ireland, this migration to the town is nearly as fatal to the vitality of the nation as emigration itself. Both are leading directly towards the extinction of the historic Irish nation, which is now menaced with the same fate as has already overtaken the Highland Scotch.²⁶

²⁵ In 1912, the number of persons engaged in agriculture in all Ireland was 1,074,485, of whom 851,997 were in the counties of the present Free State, and 212,491 in the six North-eastern counties. (Cf. *Agricultural Statistics*, 1847 to 1926, page 160.) Since then the "country" population of the Free State has fallen by about 167,000 (*ibid.*, p. xxix).

²⁶ The following extracts may be worth quoting in this connexion. They are taken from a remarkable article by Signor Mussolini, the Italian Premier, which appeared in the Fascist monthly, *Gerarchia* (October, 1928), and was reprinted in the Paris weekly, *La Documentation Catholique* (published at La Maison de la Bonne Press, 5 Rue Bayard): "At a given moment the city shows a marvellous increase, due, not to its own vital force, but to accretion from outside. But the more the city grows, the more sterile its people become, the progressive rate of sterility being in direct proportion to its rapid growth. While the metropolis attracts to itself the rural population, these latter lose their fecundity, and become as sterile as the city population in which they are merged. . . . And when the country is deserted, the city itself is near its doom. . . . This is the oft-repeated process recorded in history of the decay of nations."

It may be noted in this connexion that Ireland is the mother country of the dominating portion of the Catholic population (over

Causes of the Rural Depopulation.

That the root causes of the unnatural emigration and the fatal tendency to urbanisation are economic, is beyond doubt. Among these causes are excessive taxation; an unsuitable financial system;²⁷ the concentration of the most fertile land in the ownership of the great ranchers, who do not cultivate it; the practical cessation for the past fifteen years of the building of labourers' cottages to which small allotments of land are attached; insufficient protection for native productive effort; and the excessive importation of luxuries in exchange for exported food. Until these causes are removed, there can be no well-grounded hope of improvement.

There are, besides, many subsidiary causes at work, which tend to increase rather than diminish in proportion to the increasing weakness of the national vitality. Among such causes may be mentioned an unsuitable educational system, the increasing dreariness of rural life, which is intensified by the exodus of the younger generation; the absence of laws needed to stabilise the agricultural population; the lowering prestige of manual labour; the prevailing restlessness and craving for excitement and change; the inducements to emigration held out by relatives already in exile; the complete absence of Catholic rural organisation such as now exists in most of the Catholic countries of Continental Europe.

25,000,000) of the whole English-speaking world, and is besides practically the only place within the English Empire and U.S.A., with the possible exception of portion of Canada, where a homogeneous Catholic population with an historic past still survive.

A very large proportion of the bishops, priests and religious of both sexes that labour in U.S.A. and Great Britain, etc., come from Ireland. Hence, the Irish nation is in a sense the core and centre of the Catholic life of all the English-speaking countries. Its practical extinction, which is now threatened, or even a serious weakening of its vitality, would be a calamity of world-wide significance.

²⁷ The financial and monetary system of both Irish States (which dominates their whole economic life) is linked up with Great Britain. Owing to this fact and the practical absence of Protection for home industry, Ireland still forms an integral part of the economic unit which is made up of Great Britain and Ireland, although the needs and circumstances of Great Britain differ completely from those of Ireland.

III.—PROBLEM OF THE GAELTACHT ²⁸

The evils of pauperisation and emigration have reached their climax in the Gaeltacht. The conditions prevailing there, which are growing steadily worse since 1901, are heading fast towards the final extinction of the Irish-speaking population. A full survey of the situation with a comprehensive set of practical proposals to deal with it will be found in the *Report* issued (July 16, 1926) by the Gaeltacht Commission, which was appointed by the Free State Government for that purpose. From this Report the following general conclusions may be drawn:—

Paramount Importance to the Irish Nation of the Gaeltacht Population.

(1) The people of the Gaeltacht (in 1925 they numbered a little less than a million, of whom about 300,000 spoke Irish as their native language) are the main repositories of the old Irish Catholic tradition. "Through all their peculiar vicissitudes they have in preserving the national language as their traditional speech carried with them an undeniable right and claim to a footing on the soil of their country."²⁹ Furthermore, "the future of the Irish language and its part in the future of the Irish nation depend, more than on anything else, on its continuing in an unbroken tradition as the language of Irish homes. This tradition is the living root from which *alone* organic growth is possible."³⁰

If the Irish language dies out from the Gaeltacht as a living speech, the prospect of its revival as the spoken national language of Ireland will, to put the matter mildly, have been considerably lessened; and if the native language dies, the salvation of the distinct nationality of the Irish people will become, humanly-speaking, impossible. On the other hand, "given a State policy . . . in the spirit of the

²⁸ The term Gaeltacht is used here to denote those districts of Ireland in which Irish is the spoken language of all or of a considerable section of the inhabitants. Cf. *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta—Report*, pp. 5-10 (Eason, Dublin, 1926. Price 2/6).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3. Extract from the letter of the President of the Executive Council of the Free State to the Chairman of the Gaeltacht Commission.

President's letter just referred to . . . given a State attitude to the language, such as is outlined in the *Report* of the Gaeltacht Commission . . . then the Commission is confidently of opinion that the National language can be maintained in unbroken continuity as the traditional language of a considerable number of existing Irish homes, and passed on therefrom to the nation."³¹

(2) Hence, the people of the Gaeltacht, besides being amongst the very best of the Irish race physically and morally, are of incalculable importance to the future of the nation, and have invincible claims for several reasons upon the special protection and assistance of the State as well as of the Church. For the old Catholic Irish tradition of the Gaeltacht is one of the nation's best bulwarks against the materialism of the English-speaking world by which it is surrounded.

Their Present Wretched Condition.

(3) The people of the Gaeltacht are at present living in conditions of destitution and material misery which, probably, have no parallel in Europe—at least among rural communities. It is probable, indeed, that no like conditions can be found in any other civilised country of the world except, perhaps, among the expiring remnants of the Red Indians of the United States of America or in portions of British India. "In a bad year they are saved from extreme privation [viz., starvation] only by relief measures." Again, "the surplus population have continually to look for a living outside, while those who remain at home live in grinding poverty."³² The rateable value of the farms and houses on which they are forced to live is less than an average of thirty shillings for each person, which is less than one-third of what would be needed to enable a family to live in any kind of becoming human conditions.³³ This state of affairs, which is at its worst in the districts where the Irish language survives most fully,³⁴ is a result of the oppression and social injustice

³¹ *Report*, p. 57.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 37.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41, and 123-133.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41; also Appendix V, pp. 123-124.

of the past two centuries. For these people are, "to a large extent the wrecks of past racial, religious, agrarian and social storms . . . and of famine catastrophies."³⁵ Hence, they are correctly designated in the *Report* as the "Evicted Tenants of the Race." They are, in other words, the surviving remnants of the old Irish nation, whose forefathers were disinherited, and driven from their lands.

Their condition *has deteriorated still further* during the past five or six years. This deterioration has been produced by a succession of exceptionally bad seasons; the abolition of the Congested Districts Board in 1923; the collapse of the fishing industry about the same time; the crushing out of the few surviving rural industries;³⁶ the increased taxation; and the general depression in agriculture.

The Resulting Danger of their Final Extinction.

(4) As a consequence of these conditions the Gaeltacht population is now in immediate danger of final extinction. The total population of the Gaeltacht fell during the fourteen years 1911-1925 from 1,121,354 to 975,371, being a decrease of 145,983, or 13 per cent. of the whole. The percentage of decrease during the preceding ten years (1901-1910) was only about half of the above, so that the *rate of decline is increasing rapidly*. Seeing that the decline of population in all Ireland during the years 1911-26 was only 161,095, it follows that more than five-sixths of the total loss fell upon the Gaeltacht.³⁷ This decline in population is due almost entirely to emigration.

(5) This growing decrease of population in the Gaeltacht affects the Irish-speaking families of the Gaeltacht most of all, for they are in fact the poorest.³⁸ The Irish-speaking population, which numbered 436,758 in 1911, had actually declined to 299,249 in 1925, thus losing 137,000, or nearly 33 per cent. of the whole, in fourteen years.³⁹

³⁵ Words of the Royal Commission of 1908. Cf. *Report*, p. 36.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.

³⁷ Cf. *Report*, p. 9; also *Prelim. Report of Census of Population of Irish Free State*, pp. 1, 4, 6. The figures in the two Reports show discrepancies, but these do not impair the main conclusion.

³⁸ *Report*, p. 140.

³⁹ *Report*, p. 9.

(6) From the preceding, one may infer that the bulk of the present yearly emigrants from the Irish Free State comes from the Gaeltacht. Of the total present yearly toll of emigration from Ireland (over 40,000) probably about one-half (20,000), at a conservative estimate, comes from these districts. Hence, the Irish-speaking population, which was a little less than 300,000 in 1925, is manifestly doomed to disappear within the lifetime of the present generation, except drastic and effective measures are adopted to save it before it is too late. The core of the problem in its acutest aspects is in the economic conditions and the outflow of emigrants. These call for immediate remedies, which must be drastic if they are to be effective.

IV.—THE UN-CHRISTIAN PRESS AND CINEMA

Several of the forces which are among the contributing causes of emigration and urbanism, such as the morbid restlessness and discontent with rural agricultural life, are intensified by the un-Christian Press and Cinema, and by the vice of betting and gambling, which has become so prevalent over the whole country in recent years.

The Increasing Peril coming from the Foreign Press to the Faith, Morals and Nationality of the People.

The books and papers which the people read are too often saturated with materialism, and at best are too frequently devoid of a real Catholic outlook. A very large proportion, probably more than one-half of the papers, magazines and reviews circulating in Ireland, are British publications of the purely materialistic type.⁴⁰ Even of the papers edited and published in Ireland, only a few can be truly described as genuinely Catholic, and fewer as furnishing, in the words of

⁴⁰ On the whole question of Evil Literature in Ireland, which is at present one of the worst and most destructive of all the social evils afflicting the country, cf. *Evil Literature*, by Rev. R. Devane, S.J. (Browne and Nolan, Ltd., Dublin, 1927. Price 1/-); also *Report of the Committee on Evil Literature* (Stationery Office, Dublin, 3d.). The recent Censorship Law passed by the Free State Legislature, even if rigorously enforced, is inadequate, and leaves the position substantially unchanged.

Pius X, a "defensive and offensive weapon" in the service of Catholic principles and truth. The quantity of debasing literature of all kinds sold in Ireland is on the increase. The circulation of Sunday papers is probably over half-a-million. Of these, even the least harmful is unfit for a Catholic country, while very many are positively bad, some being English Sunday papers of the very worst type.

The Un-Christian Cinema.

The cinema is, as a rule, almost equally debasing, and, to say the least, is as far removed from the Christian character as the foreign non-Catholic Press. It is well known that the general tendency of the ordinary cinema shows, even when they are not openly suggestive or debasing, as they too frequently are, is definitely un-Christian. Like the un-Christian Press, the cinema tends gradually to demoralise and wean the mind of the spectator from his moral convictions, and from the old Christian outlook and tradition. Hence it is that in Italy one of the definite steps towards a restoration of a Catholic social régime has been a series of drastic regulations to check the operations of the cinema, as well as the activities of foreign journalists. In Ireland, there is no limitation to the number of cinema theatres, nor to the hours and times they are open: nor is there any special regulation regarding the attendance of children.

Peculiar Position of Ireland in regard to the Foreign Press.

In the matter of the un-Christian Press, the position of our people is quite different from that of the Continental Catholic countries, and calls for much more thorough and drastic safeguards than would be needed in the case of these latter. In Spain, Italy, Poland, etc., the mass of the people are protected by the language barrier, and to a certain extent by their national sympathies and outlook from the evil literature of countries other than their own. Our people, on the other hand, owing to their knowledge of English and the partial denationalisation resulting from the destruction of their own language and civilisation, are completely exposed to the corrupting influence of the Press of two mighty empires, predominantly non-Catholic.

V.—THE BETTING EVIL

Betting (that is the staking of money or other value on an event of doubtful issue which none of the parties concerned has the power to control) is not in itself morally wrong. If a person wishes for purposes of recreation or amusement occasionally to risk, in a fair bet, a moderate sum of money which he really owns and can afford to spend in recreation, he is free to do so. As in the case of alcoholic drink, the evil of betting arises from excess or other accidental circumstances; such as loss of time, demoralisation of character, the fact that the money is needed for one's family, etc. It is notorious, however, that the practice of betting is peculiarly liable to degenerate into a vice; and that it exerts a very dangerous fascination, especially in modern times, upon those that indulge in it to any extent. Owing to that fact, and owing to the many social evils attendant upon the practice, betting activities are usually controlled by law in most modern States.

Changes Wrought by the Betting Act of 1926.

In these countries, the practice of betting and gambling, as well as the affording of facilities for or offering inducements to such practices, were strictly controlled by a series of laws enacted in the British Legislature between the years 1845 and 1920. Thus, all cash betting was illegal, except on race-courses. Betting houses of all kinds were forbidden, and for the offence of keeping such a house a person was liable to fine or imprisonment. Furthermore, the circulation of betting news or of information or advice which might induce others to bet was strictly prohibited. It was, besides, a serious offence against the law to carry out a betting transaction of any kind with persons under sixteen years of age.⁴¹ Unfortunately, however, these laws were not always strictly enforced, especially since the period immediately before the European War.

By the Betting Act, enacted for revenue purposes in the

⁴¹ Cf. *Report of the Joint Commission on the Betting Act of 1926*, pp. 2-6 (Eason, Dublin, 1929. Price 1/9).

Free State Legislature in 1926, betting houses were definitely legalised on condition of their being registered; and a tax was put upon the betting transactions carried out in them. By this law there is no limitation enforceable upon the number of betting houses; so that they are increasing beyond all proportion. No restriction exists within the Free State, as far as these houses are concerned, upon carrying out betting transactions even with children. Furthermore, no restriction now exists, or at least none is enforced, upon the advertisement and circulation of betting news and of all kinds of information calculated to induce people to bet.

Present Magnitude of the Betting Evil.

Even before the European War, the vice of betting and gambling, notwithstanding the restrictive laws, was a great social evil in Ireland, being, in the opinion of many competent judges, scarcely less destructive and harmful than the drink evil. As a result of the general decadence of public morality, consequent upon the War, the betting evil grew worse. With the passing of the Betting Act of 1926 by the Free State Legislature, legalising the betting houses in the twenty-six counties of the Free State, the evil has attained to unprecedented proportions, and is at present one of the worst and most demoralising of the many social evils which afflict the country. The following extracts from the evidence given before the Joint Commission appointed by the Free State Executive to examine into the working of the Betting Act of 1926 will convey some idea of the nature and extent of the betting evil:—

It is now obvious to all responsible people that the new system established in the Free State—the licensed office for ready-money betting—is far from satisfactory. . . . The innumerable facilities afforded for gambling . . . are harmful to a great number of citizens. . . . They are at least the occasion of a serious loss of time, and are often the occasion of temptation to theft, fraud and embezzlement; and among the hard-working labouring classes they are the occasion of neglect of home and family. . . . It is plainly the duty of the State not only to protect its people against the danger of social ruin, but also to inspire them with high civic ideals, such as the responsibility of citizenship, the value and importance of serious work and the manliness of self-support, of paying one's way and of being the

helper rather than the helped. Ideals and qualities like these are certainly not fostered by the frequenting of betting shops. . . . The betting methods recently legalised in the Free State . . . have had the effect of extending and intensifying the betting craze. . . . The multiplication of these [betting] offices . . . supplies a constant and powerful inducement to betting. . . . One can witness day by day crowds of people—men, women and children—all lured by the chance of quick and easy gains, awaiting in intense excitement result after result.⁴²

Demoralisation of Women and Children and of the Poor.

The police report—and this is general—is that juvenile crime, that is, petty larceny, has increased very considerably during the past two years. We attribute that to betting, and in Dublin we attribute it very largely to the new form of sport—electric greyhound racing. . . .

Some of the bookmakers boast that they have saloons capable of holding 500 persons. These places are crowded during the whole afternoon. . . . The language is not . . . language that it is desirable that women, and children in their tender years, should hear. . . .

In Dublin city we have 220 licensed bookmakers and 186 registered premises; in Cork city, 23 licensed bookmakers and 25 registered premises.⁴³ . . .

Prior to the establishment of legalised betting saloons, the practice of betting was practically unknown to youth. . . . When the betting saloons were opened the curiosity of the youth was immediately aroused, and their attention was riveted upon betting transactions. . . . Saloons became familiar public resorts in every district, and large groups of men and women congregated in and around them. . . . School-going boys and girls were unconsciously drawn into these groups and smitten with the betting craze. . . . They not only listen to the betting conversation of adults, but they read the betting columns, and consult the list of horses and prices displayed both outside and inside the saloons. When they can raise the full amount of a bet they speculate individually; but when this is impossible one enterprising youth will collect the pennies of his companions until the amount is sufficient to hand over to the bookmaker. . . . This "co-operation" method did not originate with the youth, but with women, who club together to put on a substantial bet. . . . I am handing in for the benefit of the Commission samples of coupons which are sold in sealed envelopes at one penny each. Prizes up to 10/- can be given to the lucky holder of the [name of] the winner and a substantial profit remain to the juvenile "organiser." . . . Every penny that the children of the district can secure is in jeopardy. . . . These developments are all a result of the opening

⁴² From the evidence of the Rev. J. J. Flood, Adm., Pro-Cathedral, Dublin. Cf. *Report of the Joint Commission*, pp. 98-103.

⁴³ From the evidence of General Eoin O'Duffy, Commissioner, Gárda Sióthchána: cf. pp. 3-5.

of the betting saloons, and the recognition of betting as an "industry."⁴⁴

The Savings Movement stands for constructive thrift, which means . . . saving with a view to wise and productive spending later. As in other countries, it is assisted by the issue of a State-guaranteed certificate designed expressly for the case of small savings. Such movements are proving to be among the most valuable aids in the building up of national and individual prosperity. . . .

The movement has been affected adversely by the facilities for betting conferred by the Betting Act of 1926. Prior to the passing of the Act betting transactions were carried on in secret for fear of the law. . . . With the passing of the Act, however, betting has become a common topic of conversation.

The establishment of the betting saloons has turned the people's mind towards the idea of making money quickly, . . . lack of support for the Savings Association has followed. . . . Teachers complain that parents have money to gamble, but none to save or even to buy necessary books for their children. . . .

With regard to workingmen and their families, the Betting Act has given rise to increased interest in betting, especially on the part of women and children. Women club together and place small bets in a lump sum with a bookmaker.

Children . . . have now become so familiarised with betting through the example of their elders and the display of betting lists in saloon windows, etc., that any odd sixpences or shillings that come their way are used for gambling either on horses or in connexion with football coupon competitions.⁴⁵

From the above and the considerable mass of further information on the subject which is contained in the *Report*, as well as in *The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords*⁴⁶ (which led to some useful anti-betting legislation

⁴⁴ From the evidence of Mr. P. J. Quinn, President, Irish National Teachers' Association: cf. *Report*, pp. 40, 41.

⁴⁵ From the evidence of the Central Savings Committee (Chairman, Mr. T. P. Gill). Cf. *Report*, pp. 47-49 ff.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Report from the Committee of the House of Lords on Betting* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1901-1903). The Committee attributes the increase of betting mainly to the increased facilities afforded by the Press. It condemns very strongly the "advertisements of the sporting tipsters." According to the *Report*, the information given in these advertisements, if true, is usually obtained by fraud and corruption, and they are forbidden by law in France. The Committee recommends that betting be allowed only in the places (and only in special portions of these places) where the sport is carried on; and that effective sanction including even imprisonment be attached to the existing and proposed Betting Laws.

in the early years of the present century), one may get an idea of the grave nature of this evil, which is becoming daily more and more widespread among our people, and which is due, at least in its intensified form, to the increased facilities now afforded, and to the inducements held out, and the propaganda carried on by the Press in so many different forms. By the withdrawal of these facilities, and the prevention by State action of the inducements referred to, the evil could, in a short time, be reduced to moderate proportions.

VI.—ABSENCE OF CATHOLIC ORGANISATION

One of the baneful results of the havoc wrought by the Penal laws, and the severance of Ireland from contact with the Catholic movements on the Continent, has been the tardiness to form Catholic lay organisations for social and industrial purposes: which is recognised as one of the great needs of the hour. In Ireland we have so far no unions of Catholic employers, and the Employers' Unions that do exist are dominated largely by non-Catholics, and are too often marked by the want of a Christian outlook.

Special Need of Catholic Workers' Associations.

Catholic Workers' Associations, for both town and country, are possibly a still more pressing need, as more than 95 per cent. of the Irish working class, at least of the Free State, are practical Catholics, who, probably, are not surpassed by any Catholics in the world in the vigour of their faith, and their responsiveness to religious motives. It may be true, indeed, that it would be difficult if not impossible at the present time to organise Catholic Trade or Labour Unions of the ordinary kind, seeing that the field is already occupied by neutral organisations. But it would be quite feasible to form Catholic associations of workingmen (like the *Katholische Arbeitervereine* of Germany), whose scope would include the large range of interests, such as intellectual and religious education, workers' banks, housing, co-operative marketing, etc., which are not provided for by the existing Trades and Labour Unions. These associations, while in no wise clashing with the existing unions or hindering their effectiveness in their

own sphere, would serve to supplement them to the immense benefit of the workingmen and the whole cause of labour; and above all they would eliminate the many elements of danger which the existing unions now contain.

Decision of the Holy See Regarding Workers' Unions.

As illustrating the unsatisfactory nature of the present labour position in Ireland, the ruling of Pope Pius X on the question of Catholics belonging to the Christian Syndicates of Germany is of special importance. Besides the Socialist Labour Unions and the *Katholische Arbeitervereine*, just referred to, there exist in Germany two other types of Labour Unions, viz.: (i) The Catholic Trades Unions organised by the priests, of which only Catholics can be members; and (ii) the *Christliche Gewerkschaften*, whose membership is open equally to Catholics and Protestants of the different denominations, but not to non-Christians, such as Jews or Socialists. In 1912 the contention was raised that in accordance with the teachings of Leo XIII, Catholic labourers should belong only to Catholic unions; and, hence, that all Catholics should abandon the *Christliche Gewerkschaften* or Christian Syndicates. The matter was finally referred by the German Bishops to the Pope. Pius X gave his decision in an Encyclical addressed to the Cardinal Bishop of Breslau and the other German Prelates.⁴⁷ The main points in this important Papal pronouncement are as follows:—

(1) Catholics as a rule are never permitted to belong to mixed associations (viz., "those made up of Catholics and non-Catholics") which "directly or indirectly touch the cause of religion or morals." For, to "say nothing of other reasons, the interest of faith . . . and the just respect for the laws and precepts of the Church are, or at least may be, greatly endangered through such societies."

(2) The Social Question and the controversies connected with it regarding the conditions and hours of labour, salaries, strikes, etc., are not of a purely economic nature, but, on the

⁴⁷ *Singulari Quadam*, September 24, 1912. Cf. Ryan and Husselein, *Church and Labour* (Harding and More, London, 1920), pp. 122-132.

contrary, are primarily "of a moral and religious character and, therefore, to be settled mainly by the moral law and the judgment of religion." Hence:—

(3) Catholic workmen's unions and associations are in normal circumstances the only type of union to which Catholics should belong, "at least in Catholic countries, and also in other places where provision can be made by means of these unions for the various needs of the members."

(4) "In view, however, of the special circumstances of Catholicism in Germany," it is declared in accordance with the petition of many German Bishops that it is for the present *tolerated* and permitted to the German Catholics to join the Christian Syndicates, on condition, however, that suitable precautions be taken to obviate the dangers which are inherent in such organisations.

(5) The chief of these precautions is to be, that the Catholic workers who are members of the Christian Syndicates should also belong to the purely Catholic workers' associations known as the *Katholische Arbeitervereine*; "for experience happily shows that these Catholic associations, thanks to the clergy under whose leadership and vigilance they are conducted, contribute greatly towards the purity of the faith, and the good moral conduct of the members." The practical lessons for Ireland contained in the principles here laid down by the Holy Father need not be pointed out.

VII.—CONCLUSION

From all the above it is clear that the seriousness and pressing nature of the social question in Ireland can hardly be exaggerated.

The great counterbalancing element in the situation is the strong Catholic faith of the people and the general habit among them, which so far has not been seriously weakened, of fidelity to religious duties. It is clear that if the historical Irish nation is to be saved from the extinction which seems to threaten it, its salvation will be brought about mainly through the operation of religious forces.

The people of the Irish Catholic nation have now in large part regained the ownership of the land; and over the greater

portion of the country have also secured a very large measure of political independence. Their religious faith and fervour being what they are, what was impossible during the last four centuries is feasible under the new political conditions, namely, to inaugurate a social reconstruction on a definitely Irish and Catholic basis. A great national movement for such a reconstruction could, in a comparatively short time, change the whole national outlook, and usher in a new era of prosperity and social peace.

(Continued from page 2 of Cover.)

The following are amongst the proposed activities of the League:—

I. The establishment of study centres in which members may hear a set series of lectures, and work through a systematic course of Social Science.

II. Public lectures.

III. The publication of pamphlets and articles in current reviews and newspapers; the gradual establishment of Catholic reviews and magazines, to promote the objects of the League, which would aim at the setting up, ultimately, of a fully-equipped Irish Catholic Press.

IV. The organisation of Summer Schools for the training of members.

V. The organisation, after a time, with the sanction and help of the Bishops, of an Annual Catholic Social Congress.

VI. The inspiration and support of other movements, organised and conducted on Catholic lines, for the promotion of interests closely connected with the objects of the League, such as industrial organisation, co-operative agriculture and manufacture, co-operative buying and selling, co-operative credit, homes for the poor, home industries, libraries, after-care of boys and girls, etc.

Members of the League are encouraged to support, and, where possible, to co-operate in the work of other Catholic Organisations.

Persons who approve of the objects of *An Rioghacht*, but do not wish to become members, may assist the League by contributing to its funds, subscribing to its publications, etc.

The principal feature of the meetings, which are usually held every week by each Branch, is a course of lectures given by a priest-member on the principles of Catholic Social Science. The lecture is followed by discussion.

The printed programme and constitutions of *An Rioghacht* and any further information required may be obtained by application to the Hon. Sec., 34 Belmont Avenue, Donnybrook, Dublin, S.E. 1.