

## The Bishop of Limerick speaks :

### *How the Irish Prisoners are treated.*

Sir,—The letter, signed Niam ni Pluingcead and Maire ni Riain, on the treatment of Irish prisoners in Lewes Jail, is very painful reading, and will unquestionably excite bitter and angry feelings in everyone who is not dead to all humanity.

As I read it, the first thought that came to my mind was one of regret that these poor victims of British rule had not been shot out of hand like their brethren in the rebellion. Surely Maxwell's summary method of dealing with Irish rebels was less cruel than the slow torture and degradation of Penal Servitude.

Then it occurred to me to consider whether the people of the United States will be allowed to know the facts of this case, and collate them with the suggestions, sincere or hollow, as the case may be, that are being offered for the political emancipation of Ireland. Is it all humbug? Is there any intention to give us Home Rule in any shape or form, or are all the discussions that are being carried on about it merely the latest shape which British perfidy assumes for its own purposes?

I rather think they are. But whether they are or not we are a mean nation if we take the benefit of the sacrifices of our fellow-countrymen, and allow themselves to linger and rot in English jails without at least a protest which the world will hear.

What has brought Home Rule to the front and given it the chance which it has at present of becoming law? Is it the droning of the English "friendlies" that they call the Irish Party? They are the "patriots" that allowed the wretched measure which has been passed by Parliament to be hung up during the war, and having suspended the liberties of their country turned to recruiting in Ireland for the British Government. They were "the one bright spot," and, whether it was stupidity or knavery, the distinction of it will attach to them for ever.

These are not the seed of the men by whom salvation is wrought in Israel. They are British Parliamentarians; and when they lost touch with their own country, and were absorbed in their dealings with the Liberal Whips, a new Ireland was growing up, reviving the language of their fathers, reading the history of their country, and breathing a spirit of manhood and independence. If we had a leader, who was an Irishman, they would have followed him to the death, but they never would be content with the servility to England and English parties that has been called Nationality. That is the explanation of the rebellion of 1916. It was a reaction against weakness and stupidity and corruption.

But, hopeless as it was, it has not been fruitless. It has galvanised the dead bones in Ireland, and breathed into them the spirit with which England has now to reckon. That is the trouble in the United States, and the treatment of our brave young countrymen in Lewes Jail will not do much to lessen it.

And if the Government of England thinks that such methods will subdue us in Ireland, or can be hidden from the civilised world, it will probably find out its mistake. But whatever be the purpose of this savagery, one would think that astute politicians, as the English unquestionably are, would see the transparent inconsistency of promising us a measure of self-government, and, at the same time, of imprisoning and deporting the very men who have convinced them of the righteousness, and the necessity of it.

I am, sir, etc.,

EDWARD THOMAS,

Limerick, 30th April, 1917.

Bishop of Limerick.

*Elector of Longford Vote for the Man in Jail for Ireland.*

**VOTE for McGUINNESS.**