

The Truth

No. 2.—1920.

about Ireland

A REIGN OF TERROR.

The following letter, addressed to the Editor of the "Morning Post," describes the conditions prevalent in many parts of the South and West of Ireland to-day:—

SIR,—There are some people who speak of

Ireland as an "oppressed" country.

Will you give me, as an Irishman, space to tell your readers the truth? During the war, everyone who wished to work could make money beyond the dreams of avarice in any previous period in the history of the country. There was no scarcity of any of the necessaries of life. We were only rationed in sugar; and even then there was no real hardship. We had no experience of air raids or of bombardment of our coast towns. There was no conscription in Ireland. The country swarmed with men of military age. Sheltered behind the British Navy and Army, Ireland enjoyed comparative peace and unexampled prosperity during the war. In the midst of the war came the Rebellion of Easter Week, 1916. Stern and effective measures might have ended it in a week. Instead of that, the rebels were released unconditionally, and the rebellion revived, and it is in active operation all over the country, except in Protestant Ulster, to-day. There are police and soldiers in Ireland to-day, but they never interfere, except for protection, with law-abiding and peaceable citizens. Their activities are directed solely against those whose avowed object is to overthrow the authority of the King and his Government and his laws in Ireland.

I live in one of the most "peaceable" counties in Ireland

What are the

conditions under which we live?

The police have been removed from many of the outlying stations, and are confined to their barracks at night, lest they should be murdered. At night the country lies in the undisputed possession of the rebels and of the criminal classes. Nervous people live in a state of terror. They are terrified if a knock comes to the door.

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Houses are raided nightly by burglars, or by bodies of bandits looking for arms and ammunition. Rarely are any arrests made, as it is as much as anyone's life is worth to give evidence. The police are engaged in their barracks in fighting pitched battles with well-drilled and well-armed bands of rebels.

Recently, having had to leave my house, it was attacked by a large crowd of armed men in the early hours of the morning. They dragged my man out of bed, holding revolvers to his head, and took him to a lonely part of the fields, where he was blindfolded and guarded for two hours. He felt quite sure that they were going to murder him, and he has not got over the shock yet. They then burst open the back door of the house, and threatened to blow out the brains of the maids if they made a noise or attempted to leave their room. They then ransacked the house from top to bottom, bursting open locked doors, presses, and boxes, and tossing the contents all over the place. They took away what arms and ammunition they found. It took days of hard work to get the house into some sort of order again.

It will be seen, therefore, in what sense Ireland is an oppressed country.

The oppression is on the part of these pro-German rebels

against the King's Government, and the oppressed are the King's loyal and law-abiding subjects. So far we have little redress and little protection. If I might suggest a remedy I would say treat these rebels against the State as the United States of America treats such, and deport them from the British Empire altogether. If a score or so of them were dumped down on the German shores of the Baltic amongst their "gallant allies," we would soon hear very little about "soldiers of the Irish Republic, who refuse to recognise the jurisdiction of the King's Courts." Give Lord French a free hand. The hero of Ypres and the Marne should be able to deal with Irish bandits. At present "no arrests" is the chorus to almost every outrage. A tithe of them never appear in the Press at all, as in my own case. In any case, let us put a stop to that lying nonsense that Ireland is an oppressed country. **The one sure and certain cure for all her troubles is just that simple remedy which she never gets—firm and impartial administration of the law, and to nip criminal conspiracies in the bud.**

I dare not sign my name to this letter lest I should be shot. Therefore, I sign myself,

AN OPPRESSED LOYALIST.

21st February, 1920.

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