

# The Catholic Church and the War

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"And while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."

The great European war which started in August, 1914, and is still going on with increased fury in September, 1916, has opened the eyes of many people to dangers of whose existence they little dreamed before. Outside of the military clique in Germany, few people in other countries were aware of the ambition for world power which the Prussian Junkers cherished. Another great surprise in store for many who believed in human progress was the policy of frightfulness and terrorism with which the war has been carried on. No one outside of Germany suspected that ruthless war would be made by airships and under-water craft on defenseless noncombatants and even on neutrals.

Another great surprise in store was the indifference and apathy of the Roman Catholic part of the population of the British Empire. The situation in the Catholic portion of Ireland and in Quebec is almost identical, with a little to the good in favor of Catholic Ireland in the matter of recruiting for the British Army. The population of Quebec is about half that of Ireland, with about the same proportion of Catholics and Protestants in each—three Catholics to one Protestant in Ireland, and about four to one Protestant in Quebec.

In Ireland the statistics under the voluntary system give 75,000 recruits from the 1,000,000 of the Protestant population and 25,000 from the 3,000,000 Roman Catholics. In the two largest

provinces in Canada the population is for Ontario 2,500,000 and for Quebec 2,000,000. The recruits thus far have been 150,000 from Ontario and 37,000 from Quebec. If Quebec had done as well as Ontario the recruits would have been about 120,000 instead of 37,000. Of the 37,000 men recruited in Quebec, about 7,000 were recruited from the 1,500,000 French Catholic population and the 30,000 were recruited from the 500,000 of the other race. To keep up the same proportion as the other sections of the population French Canadian Catholics would have to contribute 70,000 instead of 7,000. It appears that Catholic Ireland has done at least 30 per cent. better than Catholic Quebec.

Ireland was on the eve of getting the home rule that it was clamoring for for so many years when the war started. The strongest argument that had been used by the anti-home rulers was that with home rule Catholic Ireland would not only start a policy of persecution against the Protestant minority, but could not be trusted in case of war with other powers. Home rule advocates, on the other hand, maintained that with home rule Ireland, as a part of the British Empire, would be as loyal as the other parts of the empire. The recent rebellion in Ireland, however, has shaken the faith of many former sympathizers with home rule in England and Scotland and other places, and it is very doubtful if the Home Rule Bill, passed before the war start-