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LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 26, 1917

IRISH SETTLEMENT ADVANCED A STAGE

The Prime Minister's proposal to give self-government to Ireland with North East Ulster excluded met with prompt and definite rejection by John Redmond and the Irish Party. In this they voiced the sentiment of all Ireland. Who wants exclusion? Not the Protestants who compose 25% of the population of Ireland. They naturally regard such action on the part of their co-religionists in N. E. Ulster as a base and cowardly desertion which must necessarily weaken Protestant influence in self-governed Ireland. If there were the slightest sincerity in the clap-trapery that Home Rule means Rome Rule, and anything more cowardly, selfish and indefensible than the withdrawal of the Protestant counties of Ulster would be impossible to conceive. Hence it was a natural if an unusual thing to find Protestant and Catholic bishops uniting in their recent vigorous protest against the partition of Ireland. No, neither Unionists nor Home Rulers, neither Protestants nor Catholics want a divided Ireland. Geographically, economically, historically Ireland is one nation. Ethnologically and religiously she is no more divided than is England. And in any case the exclusion of six Ulster counties leaves any such hypothetical ethnologic and religious problems unsolved. Exclusion proposals are not even put forward as a solution. They are a concession or a surrender to embittered animosities, aroused in Orange Ulster for selfish and sordid political purposes.

But the Irish question remains. The principle of democratic self-government holds good. World conditions make it the outstanding political ideal of the age. Driven into his mind from all parts of the world the Prime Minister confesses is the imperative necessity of settlement of the Irish question in accordance with the principles and ideals which England loudly professes. The Government, Lloyd George writes to John Redmond, "have approached the subject with a deep desire to put an end to a state of affairs which is productive of immense evil, not only to Ireland, but to Great Britain and the Empire."

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of this profession. It is British and Imperial interests, not the desire to render justice to Ireland, that assure a genuine desire for settlement on the part of the present British Government. Had such a well-considered proposal been made in good faith last July the Irish people were prepared to accept it. But the shameless bad faith of those for whom Lord Lansdowne was the spokesman killed once and forever all chance of reviving that opportunity.

In the war for the rights of small nationalities and for democratic self-government, with Ireland discontempered, sullen, resentful because of the denial to her of national rights, and democratic self-government, England stands shamed and humiliated before the world; the forces on her side are weakened; the very cause for which she fights is imperilled. Guiltily conscious of all this she has tried to exculpate herself by weakly iterating that the fault is with Ireland. Irishmen can not agree. So the Government of the United Kingdom, while assuming all the rights and powers and prerogatives of government in Ireland, helplessly disclaim all responsibility.

The decisive and final rejection of partial Home Rule based on a divided Ireland marks a definite and

irrevocable advance of the Irish question on the way to permanent solution. For the moral pressure of the civilized world will remain. The forces making for settlement will become irresistible. When Solomon ordered the child to be divided and half given to each of the rival claimants, the true mother was revealed. With regard to Ireland the world will not be convinced that Solomon's judgment should be reversed.

One distinct step in advance has been made by the final repudiation beyond all possibility of serious revival of any suggestion of settlement based on the partition of Ireland. Another is very clearly indicated by the Prime Minister when he says:

"There remains an alternative plan, which, though it has been sometimes seriously discussed, has never been authoritatively proposed—that of assembling a convention of Irishmen of all parties for the purpose of producing a scheme of Irish self-government."

This proposal differs essentially from the oft-repeated and insolent demand that Irishmen get together and agree before asking the Government to measure up to its own responsibility in the matter. Here we have something "authoritatively proposed" by the Prime Minister. Instead of an excuse for shirking its responsibility the convention will be a measure taken by the Government "to put an end to a state of affairs which is productive of immense evil, not only to Ireland, but to Great Britain and the Empire." Authoritatively proposed as such by the Government this will be seen to differ radically from the familiar advice which was meant to justify shifty evasion of governmental responsibility.

The terms in which the Irish leader rejects the first and accepts the second alternative leave nothing to be desired:

"The second alternative, 'The assembling of a convention of Irishmen of all parties for the purpose of producing a scheme of Irish self-government,' has much to recommend it. You ask: 'Would it be too much to hope that Irishmen of all creeds and parties might meet in convention for the purpose of drafting a constitution which will secure a just balance of all opposing interests and finally compose the unhappy discords which so long have distracted Ireland and impeded its harmonious development?'"

"This is the great ideal, and I trust it may be found possible of realization. My colleagues and I, at all events, will place no obstacle in the way, and we are prepared to recommend this proposal most earnestly to our countrymen on condition that the basis whereon the convention is to be called is such as to secure that it will be fully and fairly representative of Irishmen of all creeds, interests and parties, and, secondly, that the convention be summoned without delay. If this proposal is put into operation I can assure you that no effort on the part of my colleagues and myself will be spared to realize the high and blessed ideal pointed to in the concluding paragraph of your letter."

It will be noted that while he offers earnest and generous cooperation Redmond leaves the responsibility for this Government measure on the Government.

On the other hand a press despatch before us, appropriately headed: "Irish Unionists Scout Convention," says: "Irish Unionist leaders in the House of Commons stated plainly tonight that they would neither recommend the proposed convention to the Ulster council, nor serve on the convention themselves."

There is nothing discouraging in this reactionary and irreconcilable attitude. It will serve to hasten the solution by still further enlightening honest public opinion in England.

If the report be correct that General Smuts has been asked to preside at the convention it is an earnest of the sincerity of the Government and an augury of the success of the Government plan.

CONSCRIPTION IN CANADA

By the time the RECORD will have reached its readers the startling announcement that the Government has decided on conscription for Canada will have carried its momentous message to every Canadian home. Not a man, woman or child in the broad expanse of Canada but will have been thrilled with a newer, deeper and more personal realization of the dread significance of the War. It can no longer seem a familiar but far-off event in world affairs. It is our war. It is in every sense brought home to us. The tremendous issues that hang upon its outcome assume an importance hitherto but dimly realized. Party politics, in the ordinary acceptance of the

term, must now be eliminated from the public life of Canada. At this solemn moment anything less will not be tolerated.

Sir Robert Borden, with full sense of responsibility, and with intimate knowledge of the situation, has declared:

"If the cause for which we fight is what we believe it to be: if the issues involved are those which have been repeatedly declared by all our public men and in all the press of Canada, I believe that the time has come when the authority of the State should be invoked to provide the reinforcements necessary to sustain the gallant men at the front who have held the lines for months."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, while not giving immediate assent to the Prime Minister's proposal, said:

"I pledge the word and judgment of those who sit behind me that we have no intention other than to remain in the War to the end, and we are determined that we shall do our duty to the best of our judgment."

It is devoutly to be hoped that both the great political parties will reach a unanimous decision as to the method by which Canada can best discharge her duty in the present crisis. Already there have been ugly and ominous signs of racial and religious dissension in a matter of supreme importance that should have deepened the sense of national unity. Last week we interpreted the pronouncement, presumably very carefully considered, of Father Simard on recruiting in Quebec as indicating very clearly that Quebec would loyally accept any plan of compulsory military service initiated by the lawfully constituted authorities of Canada. We now feel convinced that the great significance of the pronouncement can be measured only on the assumption that the proposal of the selective draft had already been communicated to the Bishops of Quebec and had received their approval. Whether or not this be so, we may feel assured that the full influence of the clergy will be found behind any measure the Government may see fit to enact. Thus, instead of trouble in that province feared by many—and hoped for by not a few—conscription will be the means not only of enabling Canada to do her full duty in the War, but of averting a danger that was beginning gravely to menace national peace and unity. Canada has a national obligation to fulfill; in the present circumstances it seems clear that the only fair, equitable and democratic apportionment of that obligation to individual Canadians is by the action of the responsible authorities of the State.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

A subject which we have frequently urged on the consideration of our readers has recently made its initial bow on the stage of practical politics in Canada. We boast of representative government in theory; in practice the theory is often found to be far from satisfactory. Politics is the science of government; general interest in politics is the very basis of self-government. Yet we find where representative government prevails a waning interest in politics. There is something distasteful, something even disreputable, associated in the minds of a large and growing element of the population with the politics, politicians and political methods. We justify the most ghastly struggle in which mankind was ever engaged by proclaiming that it is waged to safeguard, protect and extend democratic self-government on which we profess to believe that practical human liberty depends. At the very same time, democratic institutions are falling into disrepute and in many cases into desuetude. So much so that the control of the machinery of self-government is in many cases abandoned to the least respectable elements of the community; and in others superseded in disgust by "commission" government.

There must be something wrong, when ideals and practice are so woefully at variance.

It is well, therefore, to ask ourselves what is wrong with the representative system as at present constituted; whether or not it cannot be made to work out in harmony with the principles on which it is based, and to realize the ideals which we so highly and rightly cherish.

It is with peculiar satisfaction, therefore, that we read the debate on the subject of proportional representation introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. J. G. Turiff, M. P., and the practical outcome in the appointment of a parliamentary committee to study and report upon the

subject in its special bearing on Canadian conditions. A short time ago a parliamentary committee of the British House of Commons concluded its study of certain subjects. In the matter of proportional representation this committee composed of Conservative, Liberal, Nationalist and Labor representatives reported unanimously in favor of proportional representation. In Ireland the Home Rule Act provides proportional representation avowedly in order that the Unionists of the South should be represented by members of their own choice. The principle is already in force in many countries and in some parts of the British Empire. Belgium, perhaps the most sanely democratic country in Europe, had proportional representation before the War. So had Switzerland. In France the best men in public life, including Briand and Poincaré and other leaders of the *Appointement* policy, led the movement for proportional representation in France. It barely failed of success through the opposition of the anticlerical Clemenceau in the Senate.

What does proportional representation mean? Simply that instead of single member constituencies a number of constituencies would be grouped together in order to give minorities as well as majorities their full proportionate share of representation. Thus, for instance, in Toronto a Catholic could be elected by Catholics without compromising any principle or policy to gain the support of either political party. The same would be true in most of the groups throughout the country. The Labor element would certainly be able to secure representation in most of the cities, the farmers who in the mixed rural and urban single constituencies are now with difficulty able to be represented by farmers would then be represented in proportion to their voting strength.

Without at the moment going into the details of the plan, we would urge our readers to make study of the question. Two months ago Mr. Turiff was unacquainted with the subject; now he is an intelligent advocate of proportional representation as a remedy for the evident anomalies and defects of our present system.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE DIPLOMATIC mission of Mr. Balfour to America has revived interest in him as a literary man and a philosopher. His prominence as a statesman has rather overshadowed his gifts as a writer, although there are but few men of the present day who wield a reader or a more graceful pen. He is perhaps even better known as a devotee of golf than as a maker of books, or as an angler than as a philosopher. And yet, had Mr. Balfour never played golf or guided the ship of state he must have earned a distinguished place in the realm of letters.

It is now over twenty years since the publication of the "Foundations of Belief," a book which has proved a turning point in the intellectual career of more than one perplexed soul, nurtured in the sceptical philosophy of the late Victorian age. Not that Mr. Balfour can be called an apologist for Christianity, or even a clearly-defined believer in the larger Christian sense, but that in the book referred to he demonstrated in very clear and concise terms the insufficiency of science as a basis for belief, and recognized in the Christian revelation, with its doctrine of the Incarnate God, the widest and surest foundation for the intelligibility of the world and the unification of all human knowledge and aspiration.

The "Foundations of Belief" was not written for the philosophical or theological specialist, but for what is called the general reader, and its aim was to show how best might be drawn together the beliefs of mankind into a "comprehensive unity which shall possess at least a relative and provisional stability." Having himself been schooled in the indefinite and uncertain tenets of Anglicanism, Mr. Balfour could not be expected to have that firm and unwavering grasp of the Christian revelation which is the peculiar possession of the Catholic, but it was something to have shown the groundlessness of the pretension of those "who are disposed to represent Science as a land of Goshen, bright beneath the unclouded splendor of the midday sun, while Religion lies beyond wrapped in the impenetrable darkness of the Egyptian plague." The quotation is a good example of

Mr. Balfour's felicitous gift of expression and his grasp of the basic elements of his belief.

THE CONCLUSIONS of this remarkable book, have, of course, been called in question and its statements scrutinized, as they will continue to be by both Christian believers and sceptical philosophers. It necessarily, as we have already averred, falls short of the Catholic viewpoint. But it is something in a sceptical age to have effectively turned the tables upon science, and shown that science itself, if not a mere illusion, demands the existence of a personal God. A certain school of scientific men have been wont to claim for their studies the sole human certitude of knowledge, and to relegate theology to the region of dreamland. It is Mr. Balfour's distinction to have exposed the utter hollowiness of such a claim.

MR. BALFOUR'S readiness in speech, and his facility in concentrating thought, has been described by Mr. Henry W. Lucy, one of the most capable and best known press correspondents in England a dozen years or more ago. On occasion of the death of President Carnot of France, for example, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, afterwards Duke of Devonshire, and father of the present Governor General of Canada, read to the House of Commons from manuscript a carefully prepared and long drawn out eulogy of the President, which was in effect a lugubrious sermon. During its delivery Mr. Balfour, on the Opposition benches, was observed making a few notes, and when Harcourt had done he arose and from them delivered a short, and what his auditors generally regarded as a perfect speech, epitomizing in a few well-chosen sentences the outstanding qualities of the French statesman.

THE LATE Mr. Lawrence Hutton, or "Larry," as he was familiarly and affectionately called, was nothing if not versatile. He has written volumes of stage chat, has touched up various departments of "sport" with the pen of a connoisseur, and has made the world very much his debtor by his "Literary Landmarks of London" and kindred volumes. Glancing over some fugitive papers of his recently, one describing a prize fight caught our eye. A friend, looking over our shoulder suggested as a suitable title: "Notes from a Scrap Book." The bonnet is at least respectable.

AN INTERESTING article might be made up of examples of literary cocksureness which in the event proved anything but sure. Who that is familiar with Newman literature does not recall Matthew Arnold's reference to the outcome of Newman's days of pilgrimage at Oxford as having for the doubts and difficulties which beset men's lives "adopted a solution which, to speak frankly, is impossible." It does not seem to have occurred to Arnold that by this deliverance he was abrogating his claim as a seeker after truth and usurping the functions of the Infinite. Nor that he, the apostle of the genteel, was stepping down from that high pedestal and putting himself on a level with the prig. Now, of all prigs the literary prig is the most absurd and contemptible, and admirers of Arnold (and who that loves good literature can fail to admire him) must lament so egregious a fall from grace as this.

ANOTHER INSTANCE which occurs to us, though of a different order from the preceding, concerns the person of "Fiona Macleod," whose poetic studies in Celtic folklore created a sensation a decade or more ago. None of the literary arbiters had ever seen the writer and a certain air of mystery grew up about "her" on that account. It was conjectured in some quarters that the name "Fiona Macleod" was a pseudonym, and that no such person existed. To dispel this illusion, as it was termed, the editor of the Bookman gave the "facts." "Fiona Macleod," he said, "is a genuine name. Fiona is the diminutive of Fionnaghal, the Gaelic equivalent of Flora. Miss Macleod is a native of the South Hebrides, where she passed her early years. She still spends part of the year in the Highlands of her native place and of Argyleshire. For the rest of the time she lives near Edinburgh. She is still quite young." After so positive an assertion the danger of cocksureness must have

come home to the Bookman editor when it transpired upon the death of William Sharp, a year or two later, that he and none other, a man well on in years and of established reputation, was none other than "Fiona Macleod."

WILFRED SCAWEN Blunt, poet, essayist and breeder of Arab horses, participated in the Fenian movement in Ireland in the sixties and got into prison for his pains. It was during his incarceration that many of his sonnets, so highly prized by lovers of that form of poetry, were composed; and they were first written on the fly leaves of his Bible and prayer-book. Mr. Blunt has had a romantic career. He has spent many years of his life in Egypt and Syria and knows the Moslem character profoundly. He long ago crowned his career by becoming a Catholic, and has steadfastly adhered to the Faith through the many years that have intervened. His wife, a grand daughter of Lord Byron, is also a convert. It is remarkable how many descendants of celebrated English and Scots literary men are now Catholics—Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley, Byron and many others.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

THE ANCHOR Liner Cameronia, of ten thousand tons, has been sunk. She was employed as a transport for the past two years. One hundred and forty men on board are missing. The Cameronia made her maiden trip to New York in 1911.

COMPULSORY MILITARY enlistment on a selective basis will shortly be proposed by the Government of Canada. Premier Borden, in making the announcement to Parliament, stated that fifty thousand to one hundred thousand men will be called up under this scheme for reinforcements at the front.

THE UNITED STATES will send a division of infantry to the Western front under the command of General Pershing. The announcement was made yesterday by President Wilson. General Pershing and his Staff will precede the troops, which will go to France at an early date.

PRESIDENT WILSON yesterday issued a proclamation fixing June 5 as the date for the registration of the proposed selective draft national army of half a million men to be called up under the Army Draft Bill.

THE ITALIAN OFFENSIVE is making great headway. Over six thousand prisoners have been captured. British heavy guns are co-operating on the Julian front, according to a War Office announcement. The British artillery, in passing through Italy to the front, received an enthusiastic welcome. The heavy guns have proved of material service to the Italians in their offensive.

A NAVAL FIGHT in the Adriatic on Tuesday last resulted in the sinking of fourteen British fishing vessels by Austrian light cruisers, and the torpedoing of the British light cruiser Dartmouth, which subsequently reached port in safety. The cruisers Dartmouth and Bristol chased the Austrian cruisers to Cattaro harbor, where Austrian battleships joined in the fight. French and Italian destroyers joined in the pursuit, keeping up a running fire on the Austrian vessels. One of the enemy cruisers was badly damaged, but the Allied boats were forced to sheer off when Austrian battleships emerged from Cattaro. Italian airmen bombarded the Austrian cruisers at Cattaro, and state that one of the vessels was set on fire and had to be taken in tow in a sinking condition. On board the Dartmouth one officer and four men were reported missing and three killed. Seven were wounded. Seventy-two prisoners were taken by the Austrians on board the fishing boats that were sunk.

RUSSIA'S aims in the War have been considerably modified by the overthrow of the Czar. Two years ago the mind of democratic Russia with regard to peace terms was expressed by Gregor Alexinsky in his book "Russia and the Great War." According to Alexinsky, the more thoughtful portion of the Russian people does not desire a policy of conquest. The solution of the problems involved in the termination of the War, he then foresaw, would be greatly facilitated by the triumph of the revolutionary movement. Between Czarism and the British Government a serious conflict of opinion might have arisen touching the possession of Constantinople and the Dardanelles. As the Russian revolutionaries have no interest in demanding military possession of these gateways between the East and the West, no conflict of opinion between the Russian and British democracies is likely to arise. New Russia does not seek the annexation of Galicia, Eastern Prussia, Asia Minor, the Dardanelles or Constantinople. It insists on Belgium being liberated and indemnified. It looks for a settlement of the Polish problem in accordance with Polish ideas. All annexed populations, including Alsace Lorraine, it claims, should recover the right to dispose of themselves as they deem most desirable. What New Russia aims at, according to Alexinsky, is the victory of the Allies, which "should be the victory of national liberty, of the unity, independence and autonomy

of the nations, in the peaceful federation of the United States of Europe and the World." The situation in Russia is by no means hopeless. —Globe, May 19.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

FATIGOUS ENGLISH LEADERS FAIL TO UNDERSTAND

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS UNCERTAIN BUT IRISH QUESTION WILL NOT DOWN

Special Cable to the CATHOLIC RECORD. (Copyright 1917, Central News)

London, May 19th.—I am not in despair of the future of Ireland, nor of the ultimate success of the Home Rule for which Irishmen have fought for generations, but I am in despair of the intelligence of some leaders in Great Britain, who seem to be unable to grasp the significance of the Irish attitude, or the importance to England of a settlement of the difficulty which they themselves have made.

But of one thing I am convinced; Irish affairs must be worse before they are better. I can say no more. The week end proposals of the Government were dead before they were born. What do they offer? Take them one by one. First, there is suggested the immediate establishment of an Irish parliament in Dublin. Second, they would exclude six Ulster counties by a clean cut act. Third, they would form a grand council consisting in equal proportions of members of the proposed Dublin parliament and Ulster members of the Imperial parliament, to transact all common business between the common area and the rest of Ireland, and to have power to direct, if it should be so inclined, that the Dublin parliament shall apply all the enactments to the excluded area. By this plan the government thinks it has avoided partition and that the essential unity of Ireland is preserved. This would create nothing but a grand council, which, they hope, will pave the way for a full and intimate union which no Irishman ever expects to be accomplished in this manner.

The government seems to be impressed by two conditions which it calls fundamental. One of these seems to be that it is impossible to move Ulster from its present position. The other is, that it is impossible to carry through Parliament, while the War is the absorbing topic, measures that would excite controversy. The contention of those who were unfavorable to Home Rule in Ireland is that this is neither the time nor the place to consider what they term "contentious business."

The speech of the Premier in Parliament last Wednesday can have no more fitting term, according to the ideas of the opponents to Home Rule, than that "it is a funeral oration." It is yet to be seen whether or not these are the words spoken over the dead bodies of Ireland's opponents or of the corpses of the adherents of Irish Home Rule.

It is not futile to say that we have a very large hope in America. What will be done in that country to aid our cause we cannot at this moment tell, but we are assured that the people of the great republic of the Western hemisphere wish for us the measure of autonomy which they themselves enjoy.

There is no doubt that in England those who were opposed to the measure that would give us Home Rule, and those who have worked for it are fully cognizant of the fact that the hesitation and delay that the government has displayed in dealing with the entire problem has not in the least bettered the conditions. Indeed, all whom I have heard express an opinion on the subject, and I have talked to those who are favorable and those who are opposed, agree that at least for the moment all probabilities have been destroyed that might lead to a friendly arrangement. The attitude of the government is one of the courses that produced the Longford result, and this conclusion, accompanied by a continuance of the foulest and worst campaign ever conducted by astute politicians, has made it doubtful if in the present emergency any possible settlement of the Irish question can be accepted by the enemies to the Irish party, short of an Irish Republic.

An Irish Republic may be something to dream of. It is nothing more. Every sane Irishman knows, if he will study the political history of the world, that to make Ireland an independent nation, a republic, is as near in point of time and in possibility as that the great United States shall become a monarchy. It is impossible. We have something else to strive for.

Of course, the leaders of the Irish party rejected, as they were expected to reject, the latest proposals of Lloyd George. It was not to be thought for a moment that they would accept them, nor that they would believe that they constituted an ultimatum on the part of the British Government. We know, everybody knows, that Lloyd George will either mend his hand by making different proposals, or that he will try to drop all further attempts at dealing with Ireland until the War is over. The first course certainly is not full of promise, especially as the fetters which the Orangemen have thrown about him preclude him