

The Catholic Record

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LORD LANSDOWNE, THE POPE AND PEACE

The cable has just informed us that the Marquis of Lansdowne has published a long letter in which he urges the revision of the Allies war aims and that an attempt be made to secure peace before "the prolongation of the War leads to the ruin of the civilized world."

Mirabile dictu! The noble Marquis might have quoted from the Pope's Peace Note, word for word, letter for letter, the great, dominant, overwhelming reason therein set forth by the Holy Father for that appeal which by a Protestant has called his "Christ-like plea for the bleeding peoples of all the warring nations."

But not all Protestants have so characterized the Pope's Peace Note. We had grown accustomed to the charge that the Pope was only the catspaw of the Emperor of Austria, who is the tool of the Kaiser. And more recently that the "Roman Hierarchy," who are the agents of the Pope, are everywhere actively promoting the "German Peace Drive." And Catholics everywhere must obey the hierarchy. So there you are. Papists are trying to rob us of the fruits of victory.

At this writing (Nov. 30) that is all that has reached us. Before the RECORD reaches its readers many developments will certainly have taken place. Whatever these may be one desirable result will ensue. The pitiable prejudice hitherto displayed in discussing the question of peace will have received a rude jolt, and the anti-Catholic superstition will need the careful attention of those patriotic gentlemen, reverend and otherwise, who dry-nurse it so assiduously.

sens; fifth, that we are prepared to enter into an international pact under which ample opportunities would be afforded for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means."

Each and every one of these points was advocated by the Holy Father in his Letter except the second, which was urged in express terms by the Cardinal Secretary of State in an authentic interview given to the press after President Wilson's Reply.

Wonderful! We shall never get back to the house that Jack built. The despatch very justly adds: "Lansdowne's long and intimate connection with foreign affairs and diplomacy lends unusual authority to such a pronouncement at the moment of the meeting of the inter-allied conference at Paris and because of Clemenceau's recent declaration against a league of nations including Germany."

Yes, the fact that Lord Lansdowne was for years Foreign Secretary, that even during the War he was recalled to assist Sir Edward (now Viscount) Grey in the Foreign office, gives to his pronouncement tremendous importance, and, it may be, a significance deeper than is yet suspected. No other man in English public life except Mr. Balfour and perhaps, Viscount Grey could give to this statement the importance and the significance which attach to it as coming from Lord Lansdowne.

Or it may be that the Daily News is right and that the old aristocrat, whatever his prejudices of class or party, is in this the humane and patriotic statesman who has the courage to face facts squarely.

The Daily News says: "The letter is as conspicuous for its courage as for its largeness and sanity of vision. He does immeasurable service to humanity in setting before all the nations the duty of a will to peace."

Since the above was written the morning papers contain further confirmation of the stupendous significance of the Lansdowne Letter and the vast possibilities thereby opened up.

The despatches read in part:

"Although at present the attacks against the Marquis of Lansdowne are mostly vocal, there appears to be a considerable body of Liberal opinion which welcomes his letter, and much interest is being exhibited in what the press of the United States has to say on the subject. There also is a deal of curiosity as to what support the Marquis of Lansdowne may have had among the political leaders, it being believed that he was not likely to publish such an appeal without some such acquiescence.

"An interesting point of view of some of the political discussions bearing on the letter is that it points to a possible alternative Government and policy to that of the existing Government. Mr. Bonar Law intimated that should the Marquis of Lansdowne's letter stimulate the pacifist movement to the point of the Government losing support for needful war measures, there would be only one alternative for the Government.

AN ENGLISH VIEW OF THE IRISH CONVENTION

The proceedings of the Irish Convention, like the discussions of the Conferences which led to Canadian Confederation, are secret. Save for a brief official communication indicating in the most general terms the subjects discussed the press is entirely ignored.

"The extremists on both sides are admittedly a source of danger. But what would be the real power of extremists who opposed a Convention settlement? What would be the real power of Mr. De Valera and his colleagues? At present they have taken a splendid ideal, that of self-government, and, relying on a population justly irritated against England, they have pushed it beyond the limits of reason."

"My strong impression is that Ireland is just as sick as England is of the people on both sides now are too reasonably minded to commit such an outrage against common sense as the rejection of any convention scheme, and that no mere electioneering tactics of the extremists could defeat the secret desires of the mass of the people on a crucial issue if the issue is obscured."

"The English journalist is a shrewd observer: 'They talk tremendously, but all oppressed peoples talk tremendously, and the English, not the Irish, attach far too much importance to talking in Ireland.'

Regarding the next rock on which the project might founder we shall give Arnold Bennett's own words

It is a subject the mention of which would have been scouted a few brief years ago. Its serious discussion now helps one to realize the startling progress made on the way of real and effective self-government for Ireland:

"The second is the military difficulty. Shall the Irish Government have control over the military force? This point has not embroiled the Dominions and I do not see why it should cause grave trouble in Ireland. If Ireland unitedly wants to control a military force Great Britain could not be seriously alarmed, because in the actual use of such a force the two parties would tend to neutralize one another.

"The third and to my mind the greatest difficulty is the fiscal difficulty. Shall Ireland have complete, absolute fiscal autonomy, naturally with the right to impose tariffs against any community beyond her own coasts, or shall she not? I am of the opinion that this difficulty will not be too much for the Convention."

"Real or supposed financial advantage is at the bottom of it and even if one party is primarily interested in finance—which I somewhat doubt—surely both are not and the one which is not would give way."

Without control of fiscal policy self-government is a farce. Dominion Government without local fiscal control would never have retained Canada within the Empire. Years ago Mr. John MacNeill, speaking on the subject of Home Rule before a great meeting in Dublin, said: 'I am convinced that whatever they hold back from us will become a thorn in the flesh to them rather than to us.'

Mr. Bennett then takes up the chances of extremists wrecking the scheme which the Convention evolves. It must be ratified by the people.

"Beyond the limits of reason." That great and good old Irish patriot Cardinal Logue, in the evening of a life devoted with singleness of mind and heart to God and to Ireland, agrees unreservedly with the English writer.

"The English journalist is a shrewd observer: 'They talk tremendously, but all oppressed peoples talk tremendously, and the English, not the Irish, attach far too much importance to talking in Ireland.'

Mr. Bennett continues: "I do not think that 10% of the Sinn Feiners care two pence about sovereignty. If they saw the immediate prospect of Home Rule by consent and their leaders told them not to consent, I think that the bottom would instantly drop out of the official Sinn Fein movement. For a hardworking small farmer or tradesman or artisan there is no fun in rebellions, and there is so much loss and unpleasantness."

over thirty years after one of the greatest English statesmen formally proposed it. The official Sinn Feiners have artificially added to this grievance another one—the denial of sovereign power. But this other grievance is new to the bulk of the nation and has never really laid hold of its imagination.

Sinn Fein is not a revolutionary society; it is rather at present, and so far as the multitude is concerned, a wave of sentiment or emotion, a natural and highly commendable feeling of resentment, a revulsion from Constitutional methods made farcial by the Unionists of England as well as of Ireland.

Amongst the Northern extremists Mr. Bennett found extremists indeed. "Ulster" does its full share of the "talking" in Ireland—and then some.

"Further inquiries showed me that these people were by no means representative even of Unionist Ulster—whichever way, it is not more than half Ulster. And after all I had emerged from beneath their steam hammering dizzy, but sound in wind and limb."

And Sinn Fein is educating the Covenanters who by the way have ipso facto abandoned the Covenant by participating in the Convention.

It is worth while quoting in extenso Mr. Bennett's recapitulation of some very recent history, which nevertheless seems to have receded into the remote and mythical past—so far as some of our Canadian journalists are concerned.

"When Carson organized a larger army than the King's regular army, even in Dublin, he had far more drilled potential fighters than the Sinn Feiners could get for their rebellion. When he organized this army for the avowed, deliberate purpose of defying the British Parliament by force he was supported by the very people—such as Lord Roberts—who were most alarmed about the German danger. He was supported by such grave persons as Mr. Walter Long and Lord Hugh Cecil. He was notoriously supported by distinguished Generals, and on the day when the famous solemn covenant was signed Bonar Law as the Conservative leader solemnly and officially pledged the support of the whole Unionist Party, the party of law and order, to this vast conspiracy to overthrow the supreme authority of the empire."

"The trouble is not between Nationalist and Unionist, not between Sinn Fein and Orangemen; nor is it between conflicting ideals or opposing factions in Ireland, it is between England and Ireland. The ascendancy faction aided and abetted by stupid and reckless English Toryism has bedevilled Irish politics. Remove that factor and the Irish problem solves itself. England must learn its lesson. Arnold Bennett is only one of an army of honest Englishmen who recognize this essential fact and he concludes his article by pointing it out:

"During the last thirty-five years the Irish legislation has been beneficent. Ireland has prospered under it. When the War broke out, Ireland characteristically generous, was thrilled with loyalty from end to end. But England, instead of responding

to trust with trust, responded to trust with distrust; and looked her word and deliberately spoiled Irish recruiting and gave a place of honor in Parliament to the man who had defied Parliament with arms.

"The sequel was Easter. Of course it was. 'The sequel still persists. Of course it does. And the sequel will continue to persist until England realizes that no amount of beneficent legislation can take the place of self-government, and that the sole way to tranquillize Ireland is to put faith in her.'

If the Convention fails? Mr. Bennett considers that complete failure is impossible. Good results are inevitable. Formal failure is possible and would call for great patience and forbearance on the part of England "for something would come out of the Convention that might be nearer peace than strife."

LAUDE DIGNA

She never gets a write-up in the Sunday supplement, nor does her name appear in the social column. You will look in vain for her in the automobile group of gaily attired, enthusiastic young ladies who were prominent on tag-day. Her maidenly reserve and natural manners would scarcely harmonize with their hysterically laughing pose.

Mr. Bennett emphasizes an extraordinarily important consideration with regard to the extremists of Ulster:

As we leisurely partook of a dish of ice cream, we watched her in action. She smiled so sweetly that one would really imagine that she was thoroughly enjoying herself. Even when she received a curt refusal the smile did not come off. The rebuff seemed but to give added zest to her efforts. The thought occurred to us that while many have eulogized the Little Sisters of the Poor, who gladly bear with opprobrium for sweet Charity's sake, we have not realized, perhaps, that the same supernatural motive supports this young girl in performing a task that is not too pleasant to a sensitive nature.

A bazaar is not looked forward to with joyful expectancy either by the pastor or the workers of a parish. The former would gladly choose some other means of raising the necessary funds if he knew of any equally efficient. "Why does not Father," says a parishioner of very tender susceptibilities, "tax the people instead of having those begging bees? I, for one, would gladly subscribe ten dollars." Ah, but would he? Some of these vain boasters are found wanting when it comes to the test. But, granting his sincerity, he overlooks the fact that there are in every parish a large number of people who are unable to make a substantial donation in money but who will gladly give of their time and labor to assist in any good work. This manner of bringing the members of a congregation together has, besides, very real advantages. It promotes social adiabity, which unfortunately has become, in some places, a not too striking characteristic of our Catholic people. It stimulates a healthy rivalry in church work, and fosters a laudable sentiment of parish pride. In small parishes, where the help of each one is needed, this latter quality is much more in evidence than in large congregations.

A usual feature of these entertainments is a prize-drawing contest. We know that this has been stigmatized as gambling by some ultra-moralists

who perhaps are more influenced in their views by their unwillingness to part with a quarter than by any great zeal for morality. As a matter of fact no one ever contracted the habit of gambling by plunging at a church fair. The invitation to buy a ticket is but a veiled way of asking a man to give a donation. His chief motive in taking the ticket is not to win the prize, which after all but serves the purpose of introducing that element of luck that gives interest to all innocent games of chance.

But someone must volunteer to do this asking. Miss De Style positively refuses to sell tickets. Her highly sensitive and refined nature recoils from the idea. She will stand on the busy street corner and pin boutonnières on the breasts of all manner of men. But then, other society girls do it. It is so spectacular, you know. Besides—Ah, there's the rub—it does not entail any profession of faith.

So Laude Digna comes to the rescue. She believes that if her religion is the consolation of her life, she should make some little sacrifices for it. To enjoy in private the sweets of piety, and to decline to make outboard profession of her faith is abhorrent to her sense of honor and gratitude. She accedes to her pastor's request with that cheerfulness and spirit of whole-souled generosity that is like a burst of warm sunshine. Her morning offering will be made with greater devotion on the days that follow. She has counted the cost; but she knows that He, at Whose altar she will wear the blue ribbon on the coming feast days, will not let the smallest particle of her good gift escape His mercy.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

WAR, says a well-known writer, is the great discoverer of the pure gold of heroic acts, which not infrequently lies hidden away in the most unexpected quarters, and only with opportunity comes to revelation. In this consists one of the great gains to humanity which go far to offset the awful toll of blood and tears.

ONE OF the notable material developments of the War is the concrete ship. In the old days, when wooden ships ruled the seas, that of iron or steel was as little thought of as was the concrete vessel before the outbreak of the present great conflict. Now the ship of concrete is an actuality, and indications are that it is entering upon an era of its own.

IN HER endeavor to replace the great amount of tonnage sunk by the German U-boat, in the last two years, Norway bids fair to lead the way in the adoption of concrete marine construction. This contingency has been brought about through the shortage and consequent high cost of the customary building material, and it is under such circumstances that the building of ships and lighters of concrete has made substantial headway in Norwegian yards. The method originally was the invention of a Norwegian engineer named Fougner, so that Norway would seem to have a prescriptive right to the honors of the pioneer in the enterprise. Besides being much cheaper to build than steel ships and lighters those of concrete can be completed in much shorter time, which in face of Germany's ruthless piracy on the high seas is a very important consideration. Three wharves are already engaged in this new departure and several motor boats of about one hundred tons each have already been launched, and larger vessels, of one thousand tons and more, are in process of construction. No limits, at this stage, can be set to the possibilities of this interesting enterprise.

THE CATHOLIC Women's League of England is making an appeal for support in its efforts to provide for the physical comfort and spiritual well-being of the Catholic soldier at the front, and of those dependent on them, and in safe-guarding the great army of women workers in the many munition works, factories and public offices, which the exigencies of war have thrown open to them. The organization is also making special efforts to provide for the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of the 12,000 Belgian refugees whom Teutonic ruthlessness has deprived of home and country. While those most active in the administration of the work are preserving in their public appeal a laudable anonymity, the fact that it is under the patronage of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the other Arch-