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SINN FEIN AND TREASON

Few people in Canada have had any opportunity of forming an unbiased judgment of the movement in Ireland which is known as Sinn Fein. Those who have kept their mental balance, whether Irish or not, have realized that there must be some rational explanation of its marvellous growth even though a natural feeling of resentment and anger predisposes us to judge harshly of anything that hinders or hampers the conduct of the great War. And it is a curious fact that this feeling is much stronger here than in England—except amongst that class who, according to H. G. Wells, "would wreck the Empire rather than relinquish their ascendancy in Ireland." The reason is that amongst the people of England there is an ever-increasing knowledge of Irish conditions and, consequently, an ever-growing sense of wholesome shame for their responsibility for these conditions.

Constant references to Sinn Fein in the press make it desirable that we should know something about it. We have already quoted largely from the illuminating article by Austin Harrison, editor of the English Review. No one reading this Englishman's honest and fearless exposure of the causes of the growth of Sinn Fein can continue to feel angry and resentful with the Irish movement, or his anger and resentment will receive an entirely new direction. In continuing our quotations it may serve a useful purpose to place them in juxtaposition with certain statements found in a bitter tirade by The Toronto Daily News against "The Sinn Fein Treason."

The News—"They hide the fact that the retention of a large proportion of the men of military age in Irish industries has lifted the country to unprecedented prosperity."

Mr. Austin Harrison—"The Irish question is, of course, largely economic. Take the matter of railways. Transport rates are 37% higher than in England. It is cheaper to send cattle by road than by rail; cheaper to take coal from Scotland to a seaport than to get it ten miles inland cheaper to carry goods to England and have them reshipped to Ireland at English rates than to pay Irish rates. A parcel can travel five hundred miles in England for half the price it costs for thirty miles in Ireland. Whereas in England average passenger rates are 8½d., in Ireland they are 1s. 3d., etc. And why? Because of the railway monopoly run for the shareholders, thereby crushing Irish industries. The economic scandal of Ireland is merely the result of Castle Government, which naturally has no thought in economics. The case of Ireland's chief coal pit—at Castlecomer—deprived of a railway is a flagrant example. It cannot get on. Good anthracite seams—it does not pay to work them. The colliery works at a quarter pressure—and this in the hour of European coal famine! Politics, Castle Government indifference, block the railway, though it is merely a slip of eleven miles. And so the folk of Kilkenny get their coal by horse—a distance of twelve miles. It is impossible to pay the most cursory visit to Ireland without realising the absence of an economic policy, the backwardness of things, and the stagnation of life in consequence.

"More. The starvation. There are said to be eighty thousand people in Dublin living in starvation conditions, the equal of our garrison in

Ireland. A large proportion of the people are living on bread and tea. There are children literally starving today in Dublin. The death rate is high. Without a doubt Dublin is faced with an acute economic problem which is the result in great part of our neglect of industrial conditions, our indifference to a country struggling with adverse circumstances aggravated by war. It is this aspect of the problem which has caused the intellect of young Ireland to become Sinn Fein."

The foregoing may also be a sufficient and pertinent comment on The News' statement: "The base ingratitude of the men behind this movement passes understanding."

The Daily News—"They are using the money derived from this prosperity, together with German and German-American funds, to finance what is virtually a war-time revolution."

Mr. Harrison—"The feeling in Ireland today is Sinn Fein, 'ourselves alone.' It differs from other movements in that it is strictly national and not personal, as the Parnell Home Rule movement was. It is thus far more potential. In a real sense it may be called national socialism. All those who have intimate knowledge of Irish life agree that Sinn Fein at present is bent on organization and order, not on disorder, and that it will endure to the limits of what is known in Ireland as administrative provocation."

The passages quoted in the RECORD two weeks ago furnish some graphic and exasperating instances of "administrative provocation." The editor of The English Review in a foot-note to the article under consideration says:

"Moderate Irishmen fear that there is a desire to nullify the Convention on the part of 'law and order' extremists, whether military, for military reasons, or the official set who imagine their vested interests to be in danger."

The News on Friday had a London despatch which pointedly answered at least one assertion and insinuation of its Thursday editorial: "The Sinn Feiners," said Lord Wimbourne, (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), "were not pro-German either in feeling or impulse."

The Daily News—"Rebellion in Ireland was one development upon which the Berlin Government depended for assistance when it threw its armed forces into Belgium in the first days of August in 1914. Sinn Feiners would like to grant the Kaiser a belated realization of his early hope."

Yes, the Berlin Government had good reason to count on that development. But was the Berlin Government relying on Sinn Fein? Not at all. Few outside of Ireland, and not many in Ireland had even heard of Sinn Fein at that time. They counted on Carson's German drilled and German armed volunteers. And on the blatant pro-Germanism of Ulster leaders while glorying of their actual sedition and openly boasting of their intended treason. And the Daily News was enthusiastic in its approval. But we shall let our decent Englishman speak.

Mr. Austin Harrison—"The physical force business was begun in Ulster and supported by English Tories and Members of Parliament. To allow Ulster to retain its weapons and arrest Sinn Fein Nationalists for possessing them is not logical or just and certainly not likely to help matters. If the application of policy was equitable Irishmen would not complain, for above all things Irishmen understand logic. But the application is not equitable. It leaves Ulster with its arms, while depriving Sinn Fein of theirs. Sinn Fein is not one whit more revolutionary than was the Ulster Covenant movement. But we have not so treated it and until we show the Irish that either we mean to rule Ireland in toto properly or clear out, we cannot hope to dissipate the feeling of resentment which today finds its expression in Sinn Fein."

The Daily News—"They (Sinn Fein) are a disgrace to a warm-hearted race, to great Irishmen like John Redmond, and to fine Irish soldiers like Major Redmond, who gave his life the other day for the Allied cause."

But in the effort to destroy great Irishmen like John Redmond the Ulster type of revolutionaries and their aiders and abettors in England and elsewhere encouraged in every way the growth of Sinn Fein. They were alarmed at the enthusiastic enlistment of Irish Nationalists the first year of the War, and set to work deliberately to quench that enthus-

iasm and prevent that enlistment. So the great Irishman John Redmond stated in the House of Commons. But it does not rest on his word alone. In the same debate he stated—and his statement was uncontradicted—that he had seen and read the official report to that effect in the War office.

And on March 7th last John Redmond said:

"I know in this contest between Constitutionalism and Revolution, there are some men who are so wild and bitter in their hatred of Home Rule that they wish God-speed to Revolution,—there are some such men outside this House, some in the press, and some inside this House—I do not know whether the Prime Minister heard the statement made by Major Newman the other day in which he said it had been in North Roscommon he would have voted for Count Plunkett. (An honorable member—"Not an Irish member.") Mr. Redmond—"I did not say an Irish member, I said it was the member for Enfield in this country. He is a type, if you like, of the English members who are so inveterate in their hatred of Home Rule, that they wish 'God-speed' to the Revolution and look for the destruction of the Constitutional movement."

Major Newman—"What I said was I would vote for the Sinn Fein member to smash your Party."

In that same debate last March that great Irishman, John Redmond, uttered also this statesmanlike warning to the British Prime Minister who then betrayed the weakness—and worse—of a shift politician:

"Any British statesman who teaches once again the Irish people the lesson that a National Leader who endeavors to combine loyalty to Ireland's rights with loyalty to the Empire is certain to be let down and betrayed, by this course is guilty of treason, not merely to the liberties of Ireland, but to the unity, strength and best interests of the Empire. That is the course which the Irish people will recognize as having been taken by you."

When The Daily News talks of Sinn Fein treason it should remember the treasons out of which it grew. The News assisted arrogantly, insolently, in sowing the wind; and now it rails at the whirlwind.

SOME FURTHER LIGHTS AND SHADES

Leaving aside the misinformed and misleading criticism of which The News editorial is typical let us glimpse real conditions in Ireland as seen through the eyes of an Englishman trained to observe and patriotic enough to tell the truth.

"So far as religious antagonism is concerned, I was agreeably astonished. We greatly exaggerate its importance in England. I found Catholics on the most friendly terms with Protestants. As the economic problem of Ireland rises in the foreground, so the religious difficulty tends to disappear."

This will astonish a great many people whose minds have been obscured by the Home Rule-Rome Rule, Ulster Covenant rant; some may not be agreeably astonished, perhaps rather shocked, but there is, nevertheless, many evidences of the truth of the statement.

After summing up the result of his observations and trying to see conditions in the perspective of a patriotic Irishman, Mr. Harrison shocked and shamed exclaims: "It is a terrible indictment."

And then:

"Can this continue? Can this be allowed to continue? In Ireland our good faith is at stake. The settlement of the Irish question is the justification of our cause. We have to face that now. Fortunately, I feel that in the Convention there is genuine ground for hope."

But to give the Convention a chance he would suppress the agent provocateur, "rid the country of the vicious espionage system which is a disgrace to our civilization," replace the Czarist Russian policy with a policy frankly conciliatory, or at least establish some "consistency of government" instead of the arbitrary and exasperating policy which is making Sinn Fein all-powerful.

Sinn Fein, he admits, is the root of the Irish problem. He scouts the misconception which regards Sinn Fein as a secret revolutionary society; it is not even a party, rather it is a sentiment, natural, inevitable when we look squarely in the face the conditions which gave it birth.

Yet he is not blind to its dangers: "Now it is clear that if we are faced by a national movement, which in its existing form is an emotion rather than a policy, and that movement is not recognized as constitutional, and so driven further and further underground, the elements of trouble, of conspiracy, of subterranean plots and counterplots are present, leading for anarchy and all the disastrous eccentricities of discontent, which as they develop tend

more and more to undermine the middle path of Nationalism, and so thrust the country into two sharply opposing camps—the governors and the governed."

The world applauds President Wilson's ringing declaration that governments derive all just rights from the consent of the governed. Open and cynical defiance of this fundamental principle of democracy in Ireland while justifying the world-devastating War because of its violation in Belgium is more than the conscience of the world will stand.

"The world is watching us. Ireland is indeed the test of our so-called English civilization, and if we fail there history will condemn us."

Yes; and failure there enormously weakens the moral forces fighting on the side of the Allies, in the cause of democracy and liberty.

"It is a certainty that Castle rule will have to go. If that is the case why these provocative measures? Why this police provocation, of which I could cite various highly creditable instances? We are merely complicating the problem by the present policy of inconsistency and unfairness. What struck me forcibly was the strong discipline among responsible Sinn Feiners, who are to-day fully conscious of their power and are the last people likely to jeopardize the reality of the movement by futile attempts at rebellion. (Italics ours). But in Ireland I heard ugly rumors. I met people there who are agitating to create trouble. I came across political firebrands and incendiaries who seemed to think the only solution lay in Cossack ruthlessness, and were openly working to instill that poison into the ring in Phoenix Park. I heard too often that foolish phrase 'the strong hand.' Under military government we know what that means. But it would be fatal in Ireland to-day, fatal because of the international situation, fatal to the very creed of our Empire."

Forced underground Mr. Harrison sees danger in Sinn Fein. He reproaches the folly which would provoke such a needless calamity.

"As I see the situation responsible Sinn Fein is anxious to become a Constitutional Party. Unlike former agitators, it is economic and social in its aims; not a Party of personality, the ultimate objective of which is interdependence. No doubt it is difficult to accept that view. But Sinn Fein on the whole talks less extravagance in its elections than we do at any election. The flag is largely a panache. The letters I. R. on the banner need not signify more than we choose to read in South African Imperialism. Ireland cannot stand outside the Empire. I believe responsible Sinn Fein accepts that attitude."

Light predominates in the concluding paragraphs:

"For this reason I have returned from Ireland full of hope however qualified. That the Convention will not labor in vain I am convinced. All sections deplore the existing uncertainty. All men are anxious to come to something like a solution, which is not half so difficult as many of us are led to believe."

"One of the men who are reputed to know best all the intricacies of the Irish situation said to me: 'It will depend on the point of provocation.' From what I could see, that would seem to be an accurate estimate. Provocation will not emanate from Sinn Fein, that is the point, for the simple reason that the movement has outgrown the necessity for either martyrdom or physical sacrifice. If we realize that and make up our minds to hold the ring, as it were, pending the deliberations of the Convention, the prospects of a happy and new Ireland are real and may in the truest Imperial sense become constructively enduring."

"But if Mr. Duke and Sir Bryan Mahon allow themselves to be swayed by reactionary forces urging them to the 'reconquest' of Ireland, then we shall create a crisis the result of which may be disastrous to the name and honor of England. It is our great responsibility. To precipitate bloodshed through belated attempts at firm government, as it is called (it is really police government), would call forth the reprobation of the world and our own Empire would condemn us."

The editor of The English Review, and such as he, prepared, no doubt, the ground for the good seed sown by the debate on Redmond's recent resolution. The greatly improved situation in Ireland of which the cable now informs us is not due to any change in Sinn Fein, but to the restraint imposed on "Cossack ruthlessness" of the "law and order" extremists; and to a realization that to give the reactionaries their way would be to "call forth the reprobation of the world." Let us hope at any rate that "administrative provocation" has been given its quietus. If so there is not the remotest danger of a Sinn Fein rebellion in Ireland.

Sorrow is not given to us alone that we may mourn. It is given to that, having felt, suffered, wept, we may be able to understand, love, bless.

If saying were doing, every pulpit would be a saint's shrine.

HE DIED INTESTATE

The above reference to a deceased would imply no blame if he were a pauper and had nothing to bequeath; or if he had made a disposition of his earthly belongings before he died. It might indeed redound to his credit if he had distributed his goods to feed the poor; or if through a vow of holy poverty he had voluntarily abrogated his right to possess property. But with the exception of these cases it is generally an indication that he failed to perform a very important duty. To make this clear it were well to state the conditions upon which an individual holds property.

To God belongs the earth and the fulness thereof; and we are but stewards of the earthly goods that He has entrusted to us. Reason and religion teach that each should be secure in his own possessions; whether they may have accrued to him by heredity or by his own personal industry. During his lifetime a man has the right to use the means at his disposal to supply his own and his family's needs. Charity and religion demand of him that he should give of his superfluity to aid the poor and to further God's spiritual interests. After these requirements have been fulfilled, there may yet remain money and property with which to provide for the needs of his old age, and to make suitable allotment to his children. This suggests two very important obligations on his part.

The first of these has reference to his duty to himself—and herein is included the partner of his joys and sorrows, who is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. The head of a family would not be exercising well-ordered charity if in his lifetime he disposed of all his goods to his children and left himself dependent upon them for his maintenance. One of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies, which has justly been termed "the triumph of Gothic genius," deals with just such a case. There have been fathers who, like King Lear, were deceived by the specious promises and beguiling wiles of ungrateful offsprings, and who in their last days have been cared for by a disinherited child, some faithful Cordelia from whose heart paternal love and reverence were not banished, even by the consciousness of the wrong that had been done her.

It should not be inferred, however, that the head of a family should hold on to all his property until he dies. He should make definite provision for himself, it is true; but this need not conflict with the granting of a suitable portion to a son or daughter, who has arrived at marriageable age and who is desirous of establishing a home of his or her own. There is little doubt that the existence in our parishes of so many old maids and old bachelors, and the exodus of young people to the cities and to the West, with the resultant bankruptcy spiritual and material, is due, in large measure, to the Hibernian propensity in parents of treating grown-up people like little children.

Still greater evils ensue if a man dies without making his will. What injustice, what bitterness, what sins are often the fruit of such a neglect of duty! Scarcely is his body cold in the grave when the turmoil begins. Members of the family, who had no moral claim to an equal portion of the inheritance, receive it, and are not grateful, for it was not a voluntary gift. The son and daughter who remained at home to care for the old folks saw the fruit of their labor distributed among others, and no reward made to them for their self-sacrifice. Is it any wonder that the memory of the deceased is recalled only with feelings of indifference or resentment? And yet it might be that he was at heart the most loving and just of fathers. He intended to arrange his business before he died in a manner to deal fairly with all his children. But death came unexpectedly, and it was now too late to right the wrong.

The uncertainty of life should make it a matter of conscience for a man, especially if he has others dependent upon him, to attend to those duties that pertain to his stewardship. In life he would not willingly wrong any of his children, and yet if his will is not made, he is in constant danger of doing them and him self an injustice. That he has little to will is a poor argument to advance. There can be as much ill feeling and family dissensions over a few hundred dollars as over an estate worth thousands. It is equally vain to argue that a man should not will away his property while he may have yet many years of life ahead of him: for a will has no

force until after the death of the testator. It is a simple thing to make a will, and it is not even necessary to have recourse to a lawyer. Blank forms can easily be obtained, and if these are filled out and signed in the presence of two subscribing witnesses, the will is valid. In fact, it is not necessary to have any particular form so long as the will of the testator is clearly set forth. A codicil can be added or a new will can be made at any time, if altered circumstances would suggest a change in the one already made.

Verbum sat sapienti—a word to the wise should be enough. It is indeed unseemly and painful to see a dying man have to turn his attention to worldly affairs, when the anointed lips should be uttering nought but pious ejaculations, and when the soul should be wholly intent upon entertaining the Heavenly Visitor Who has come to be his Viaticum, his food for the journey.

THE GLEANER

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ARTHUR POLLEN, described in despatches as the "famous British naval expert," whose latest statement on the submarine menace has had a heartening effect on the Allied peoples, is a son of the well-known Oxford convert, John Hungerford Pollen, and is himself a Catholic. The family in this generation has produced several men of distinction, two of whom (brothers) have rendered important services to the nation in the present War. Two other brothers, Father John H. Pollen, S. J., and Father Anthony, have earned distinction in other ways, the one as historian and the other as composer and naval chaplain. Mrs. Pollen, widow of the Oxford convert, and mother of the four sons, has also several books to her credit, and has an international reputation as an authority on lace. She is the author of the article "Lace" in the Catholic Encyclopaedia.

ARTHUR POLLEN, the naval expert, is the fifth son of the convert. Born in 1866, and after training at Cardinal Newman's Oratory School, Edgbaston, and graduating from Trinity College, Oxford, (Newman's first college), he studied law, and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, in 1893. It is as inventor, however, that he has earned distinction. The A. C. Automatic Fire Control System is his device, and his basic theories of gunnery and the inventions embodying them, have been largely adopted by the Admiralty. The War has brought him to the front as perhaps the greatest British authority on naval armament, and the means of combatting the submarine menace. His statement that "the submarine is defeated," and that while there may be fluctuations up and down in the matter of losses "they should never cause us uneasiness again," should, if substantiated by results in the near future, remove the last vestige of doubt on Germany's part as to her impending doom.

THE DIGNITY and sanctity of the married state is a common theme for presentation in the Catholic pulpit. While the world essays to drag it down to its own level, and it is the constant theme for ribaldry and ridicule in current literature and upon the stage, the Church never ceases to remind her children that it is a holy state, designed by God Himself for the sanctification of individual souls, for the protection of the human family, and for the perpetuation of the race.

It is unseemly, therefore, that even Catholics should be found joining hands with those who can see in matrimony nothing more than a butt for coarse jests and unholly ribaldry. It might be expected that at least the Catholic press would set an example in the right direction, but too often the humorous column in our papers is made up of just such jests as we have described. In one which recently came under our notice, out of sixteen "jokes" twelve were of this description. This is not as it should be. If Catholics who recognize in matrimony a Divine institution, and a Sacrament of the New Law, would but put their belief into practice it would go far to counteract this debasing tendency of the day.

THE PLEAS PUT FORWARD by applicants for exemption from military service are many and varied. Those made on religious grounds are, many of them curious, and it is amusing to

note the large claims put forward by representatives of obscure sects which are not only not known to the law, but have not even a name. One such, before a Toronto tribunal, said that his particular organization consisted of from 12 to 15 persons who met in the home of one of them every Sunday. When asked if his "church" was recognized (meaning by the law) the reply was, "Yes, by God," and to the further query, how long it had been in existence, the answer was: "Since the time of Christ." Absurdity could not well go further, but after all, these men are but acting upon the principle that brought Protestantism into existence, viz., that in regard to religious belief every man is a law unto himself.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

PARTIES OF FRENCH troops succeeded in making their way into the German advance lines behind the Ailette River, according to a German official report, which claims that the Frenchmen were driven back. The Germans say that the feat of our Allies was possible only because of a heavy fog. They add that the artillery duel along the Ailette has increased in intensity. These indications point to a serious attempt of the French to follow up the advantage they have gained north of the Aisne by conducting an attack against the German positions behind the Ailette River, which were taken up when the French forced a withdrawal from the Chemin des Dames. If the French can secure a footing beyond the Ailette and continue their advance toward Laon they will strike a heavy blow at the foe, and materially assist the British in the work of loosening the German grip on the Belgian coast and the lines of communication thereto. The French and Belgians are also displaying considerable activity in the Dixmude sector of Flanders. Several raids are reported by the British.

IN PALESTINE the British continue to advance very rapidly along the seacoast, and have now reached a point only three miles south of Jaffa, fifty-four miles northwest of Jerusalem. It is officially announced that over 9,000 prisoners have been taken since October 31. In spite of the constant succession of defeats the Turks are showing some fighting spirit, and in the last report to hand there is recorded an attack upon New Zealand troops, which was beaten off by a bayonet charge.

THE ITALIANS continue to hold their own along the northern front from Asiago to the Piave River, and officially announce that all attempts of the Austro-Germans to smash through their lines have been repulsed. Along the riverfront Rome declares that great artillery activity has been maintained by both sides, but does not say anything of the Berlin claim that enemy troops crossed to the western bank of the Piave near the Adriatic Sea and captured one thousand Italians. This may deal with movements already reported, and which the Italians have previously claimed to have checked, with the enemy surrounded in the marshy district. Unofficial despatches declare that in this district the Italians have taken a lesson from the Belgians by opening the floodgates of the Piave and Sile Rivers and allowing the water to flood a considerable triangle of ground apparently in an attempt to drown out the enemy forces which crossed the Piave near the sea. This also, it is said, will bar the enemy from approaching Venice through the great lagoon, or bombarding the city from the position he had taken between the two rivers. One report says that the inundated territory forms triangle about twelve miles on each side, too deep for men to negotiate, but not deep enough to allow of boats being used. The German claim of the capture of the Dobbiaco, on the northern front, is no doubt true, and it is likely that the Italian retirement here was part of the plan of defence being followed.

IT IS AGAIN asserted that Kerensky's forces have been defeated outside of Petrograd and have retreated. Moscow is said to be still in the throes of civil war, with Kerensky followers controlling in the centre of the city and the Bolsheviks the outlying districts. Cossacks and cadets, also supporting Kerensky are reported as controlling Kiev.—Globe, Nov. 17.

EDIFYING

The writer is in receipt of a letter written by one of the young heroes who willingly enlisted in the expeditionary force which goes to fight our battles in France. It will not be a breach of the censor regulations, we hope, if we tell how much we were edified by part of the contents of that epistle. On the steamer which carried this particular branch of our fighting troops a young Catholic soldier died. From the context we judge there was no Catholic chaplain aboard, though the information is vouchsafed that of forty officers, nineteen were Catholic and hundreds of the soldiers belonged to the Church. The unfortunate boy who passed away was stricken with pneumonia which he evidently was not prepared to meet. He lingered shortly and when it came time to commit him to the watery grave the Catholics on the ship gathered about the body wrapped in an American