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THE IRISH SITUATION.

(By An Occasional Correspondent.)

The quickest and safest way to reach a knowledge of the Irish political situation at the present moment, is to take the expressions of the leading men in the field of Imperial Government and politics of Ireland. By bringing together their different pronouncements, even though we may not agree with them all, or in full with some of them, still we are sure to have the situation, and the spirits that animate different groups of public men, in its exact details. One of the most important expressions was that of the Earl of Dudley, lord-lieutenant of Ireland, at the annual dinner of the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin. He seemed to think that Ireland's prospects were most encouraging: Agitation had been abandoned largely, and he hoped that those who were responsible for the Government of Ireland never again would be compelled to enforce the exceptional treatment which they had been obliged to resort to early in 1902. The country had shown a genuine desire for a just, final and amicable solution of the land question, and he believed that the recent land conference would prove an epoch in Irish history, the mainspring thereof being toleration, moderation and co-operation. With these principles there was nothing Ireland could not accomplish.

Another statement of significant importance was that of Sir Anthony MacDonnell, under-secretary for Ireland, speaking at a meeting in Dublin. After highly praising the report drawn by Lord Dunraven's Irish landlords and tenants' conference as one of the most important documents that had seen the light of Ireland for a generation, he said he could not divulge the provisions of the Land Bill, but he could say that the Government's Bill was constructed with an honest desire to do justice to all concerned, and with the object of laying the foundation of a lasting peace in Ireland.

Already we have told of the rejection of Mr. John Redmond as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. At the meeting, during the course of which he was re-elected, a resolution was passed to the effect that in view of the rumored intention of the Government to depart in the text of the new land bill from the terms adopted by the recent land conference the party places itself on record as announcing that these terms are the lowest the tenants would accept. Irishmen will follow the session of Parliament which opened at Westminster Tuesday with more anxious interest than has been accorded to any previous session within the memory of the present generation. For them Secretary Wyndham's forthcoming Land Bill contains, in the language of the leading Irish politicians, "either peace or war." If it embodies the principles of the Dunraven conference, whereof the most important is that providing for tenant purchase with the help of the government, the measure will receive the support of Nationalists as a body. If it repudiates the principles of the Dunraven conference, as recent unofficial intimations indicate may happen, the Nationalists will attack the bill tooth and nail and the whole of Ireland, now settling down, will be thrown into tumult. Notwithstanding the emphatic assertion in some quarters that the Government has decided to reject the Dunraven recommendations and to frame a measure on the lines of former land bills the leaders of the Nationalists refuse to believe in such a possibility. They point to the many utterances on the part of responsible officials that justify Ireland in hoping for a more radical departure containing the beginning of a final satisfactory settlement of the land question.

As a result of interviews with the Duke of Abercorn, Lord Dunraven, John Redmond and others, the Associated Press has compiled a statement of the situation, at the present moment, as regards the plan to finally settle the Irish land question. We may take this summary, or bird's-eye-view of the situation as pretty exact—

All the interested parties, Nationalists, Unionists, landlords, and tenants, are now, for the first time in the history of Ireland, in agreement upon the lines of the Dublin conference. They have also joined forces in bringing pressure on the Government to make Secretary Wyndham's forthcoming bill agree in spirit with the recommendations of the conference, and all indications point to the bill's conceding those demands.

It will be introduced in Parliament at the end of March, and, if passed, will accomplish what Mr. Redmond and Lord Dunraven agree in saying will be one of the "most extraordinary, peaceful revolutions ever effected." If Mr. Wyndham, for lack of funds or other causes, fails to meet the views of the conference he will have on his hands, to quote Mr. Redmond, "an Ireland such as the world has never seen." In this view such a strong supporter of the Government as the Duke of Abercorn concurs.

Mr. Redmond adds: "If this agreement of keenly opposing parties lacks fulfillment through the Government's refusal there will be twice as many members of Parliament in jail and twice as many counties under the ban of the Crimes Act as there were prior to the present truce. This truce will be continued until the terms of the bill are revealed. A great Nationalist conference, at which Bourke Cockran of New York will be one of the principal speakers, will meet in Dublin in April, to take action on the subject."

The Duke of Abercorn, who is President of the powerful Irish Landlords' Association, which at first declined to join the Earl of Mayo and Lord Dunraven in conferring with the Nationalists, but which later signified its assent, frankly admits that he is amazed at the results achieved and at the "happy topsyturvydom" now prevailing in Irish politics. Asked whether he thought the Nationalists were sincere in their professions of willingness to settle the long-standing grievances by a compromise, the Duke emphatically expressed his belief in their complete sincerity. The Duke could not conceive that the Government would "stand on any quibbles" when the solution of the most serious problem of the empire was within its grasp. He thought the process of changing the holdings from the landlord to the tenant might possibly cost \$3,500,000 annually, adding: "It surely would be cheap at that price."

Neither Mr. Redmond nor Lord Dunraven believe the transfer of the land would involve more than \$1,500,000 annually, and both think that the economies resulting from the cheaper administration would greatly reduce this figure, if they do not eventually quite wipe out the necessity for state aid in the payment of the difference between the maximum price the tenant can afford to pay and the minimum price the landlord can accept.

The Irish Unionist leaders are of the opinion that the whole question might be declared settled in advance if the Government was "not so desperately hard up." In consequence of this lack of funds, Mr. Wyndham's bill will not be introduced until after the presentation of the budget, so that any money to carry out the provisions of the bill will not be included in this year's taxes.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Ritchie, while sympathetic towards Ireland, now faces a more serious financial situation and more bitter protests against overtaxation than have confronted any Chancellor in recent years. The phenomenally small Government majorities since Parliament reassembled are indications of the storm which is brewing over Mr. Ritchie's head. He must also float a new Transvaal loan before Ireland gets an additional penny, and the Government, with reason, is keenly anxious in this respect. Consols recently were at the lowest point reached this year, and inquiries made at Anglo-American banking houses, such as the Morgans, Seligman, and Speyers, reveal the fact that there is no indication of the United States subscribing to a loan. Since the last war loan was so largely underwritten in New York the international monetary situation has completely changed, and the firms here say the Americans now need their capital for use at home. One financier said:

"If the Government brought out a loan which would really provide means for settling the Irish question, they would get more understanding than they would know what to do with, both here and in America."

Mr. Redmond was asked if he thought the landlords were in earnest, and he replied: "I have every reason to think they are just as anxious as we are to settle once and for all Ireland's troubles. If Mr. Wyndham brings in a bill on the lines of the decisions arrived at by the Dublin conference the greatest step in the industrial and social history of Ireland will have been ac-

complished. More than that, it will be a most important step towards Home Rule. Under the new system the landlords will live in Ireland, derive benefit from their property, and begin to take a new interest in Irish affairs. They will then see the necessity for an extension of local government and will eventually become as anxious as ourselves to secure Home Rule."

Another View of the Persecutions of Religions Orders in France.

"Le Journal des Debats," of Paris, contains a protest written by a Protestant against the policy of the government as endangering French interests abroad by the persecution of the religious congregations. The article is in part as follows:—

To give an idea of the blighting loss which this new Radical synodus will inflict on the French nation, it is sufficient to supply a few figures. In China the unauthorized congregations possess 12 hospitals and 1,415 schools, orphanages and colleges frequented by 25,000 children. In Armenia they have 8 hospitals, 15 schools and 2,911 pupils. In the Island of La Sonde 4 hospitals and 222 schools, with 12,443 pupils. In L'Emyrne, on the central plateau of Madagascar, 2,051 schools, with 99,214 pupils, also an astronomical observatory of high repute, and two hospitals, of which one is for leprosy. At Ceylon they have 37 schools, with 1,300 scholars, two industrial schools, two hospitals, and two dispensaries. In Syria they have 193 schools and 14,270 pupils, one hospital, and the celebrated University of Beyrouth, founded under the auspices of Gambetta, and largely subsidised by the French Government. In Mesopotamia there is the delegation of the Holy See, 89 schools or colleges, with 6,000 pupils; the Syro-Chaldaic seminary of Mossoul, the Ecole Normale of Monsignor Yacoub, the Apostolic Delegation of Bagdad, and eight hospitals, where in 1899 more than 30,000 invalids were taken care of. At Jerusalem there is the famous school of biblical studies, the publications of which are regarded as an authority. It is open to all savants, of whatever creed or nationality, and for two years past French Protestants have there perfected themselves in Oriental subjects, in company with German students sent by the professors of the University of Leipzig.

To continue to cite these works of charity or political influence, there is the custody of the Holy Land, which is placed under the French protectorate, and of which the vicar custodian is always French. At Jerusalem there is the hostelry for French pilgrims, two schools kept by the nuns of Notre Dame de Sion. In Egypt there are the 35 schools of the Coptic mission, with 2,000 pupils, and a hospital; in Tripoli the schools of the Marist nuns, mostly Alsatians, where the education given is of the highest order. The 22 of the Gallas country, and of Arabia, with their 7 orphanages and dispensaries; the 13 schools and 6 dispensaries of the Nile delta; the school of Pireus, and that of Naxos.

Turning to the north along the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, we find the Seminary of St. Louis; the schools and seminaries of Koum-Kout, of Phanarski, and of Haidar Pasha; on the coast of Asia the schools of Kara Agaicht, near Adrianople; the college and school of Philippiopolis; the schools of Yamboli, of Earna, and of Gallipoli.

The list is already long, but it is far from being exhaustive. To render it anything like complete it would be necessary to cross the ocean and visit the Sandwich Isles, Tahiti and the Marqueses, where the Fathers of the Sacre Coeur, of Picpus, have 68 schools, with 3,371 hospitals, of which the famous one for lepers has been rendered illustrious by the devotion of Father Damien; to visit the Island of Samoa, Fiji, and Solomon; to sail to New Caledonia, the New Hebrides and New Zealand, where the Marists have 229 schools and orphanages, and six hospitals. Then to approach New Guinea and the Isles of Gilbert and Ellice, where the Fathers of the Sacre Coeur of Issandum direct 64 schools, with 3,052 pupils. Thence to travel to South Africa, where the Oblates of St. Francois de Sales of Troyes have eight schools and two dispensaries; to penetrate Natal, where the Oblates of Marie Immaculate have 56 schools or orphanages, and five hospitals or dispensaries. Next to turn towards the Niger and Dahomey, with all the region of the Gold Coast, the Ivory Coast, and the Gulf of Benin, in order to appreciate the invaluable co-operation which is lent to French interests and admin-

istration by the religious of the African Mission from Lyons, with their 88 schools, frequented by 3,525 pupils, their seven schools of agriculture, their 24 hospitals, including four for leprosy, and their two asylums for the aged and infirm.

It is not to say that these thousands of schools founded by the devotion of our religious orders will disappear. Oh! no. There are plenty of people in the world to profit by our faults and follies. Only the spirit will be changed; and while up to this time, France has benefitted by the labors of the orders, for the future Italy, Germany, England and the United States will reap the harvest prepared by our French missions, and once again we shall have labored "pour le roi de Prusse."

WITH THE SCIENTISTS

KITE FLYING.—At the annual meeting of the Royal Meteorological Society, held recently in London, the President, W. H. Dines, delivered an address on "The Method of Kite Flying from a Steam Vessel and Meteorological Observations Obtained Thereby Off the West Coast of Scotland." The idea of using kites to obtain meteorological observations was said to be one of long standing, having been put forward so long ago as 1749 by Dr. Alexander Watson of Glasgow. In 1883 Mr. Archibald used kites to discover the change of wind velocity with elevation, but the credit of inaugurating the method so extensively used during recent years, most successful at kite flying in America, and who had also pointed out was due to Mr. Rotch, who had been the advantage that could be gained by using a steam vessel for observations at sea. Committees had been appointed by the Royal Meteorological Society and the British Association, with the result that almost daily observations were made during the months of June, July, and August last year, at first from a land station and afterward from the deck of a small steam tug, at Crinan, on the west coast of Scotland. For observations to the height of 4,000 or 5,000 feet, the apparatus required was not costly, but for higher elevations a more extensive outfit was necessary. A detailed description of the apparatus which had been perfected by himself was given by the President, as well as his method of making the observations. A steam engine was found preferable for the winding of the several miles of wire necessary for an ordinary high observation. It was found practically to procure eight miles of wire in one piece.

A good kite was the most important of all the apparatus, and that recommended was a modified form of the Hargreave kite. In addition to the apparatus, at least three skilled persons were required to assist in the observation, except under the most favorable circumstances. Self-recording instruments were sent up on every occasion when the wind was strong enough; they were hung from the wire, about 200 feet below the kite, and consisted of a self-recording aneroid barometer to give the height, a thermograph, and a self-recording hair hygrometer. These instruments weighed three pounds, and with very light winds could not be sent up. Observations were made to the height of 15,000 feet, and this entailed the use of four kites. At Crinan, with a wind anywhere from the West, the observations might be taken as equivalent to ascents over the Atlantic Ocean. A great uniformity of temperature was found to prevail from hour to hour over the sea, and Mr. Dines gave it as his belief that the daily range of temperature over the ocean is less than 0.5 degrees. Less change of wind direction was found over the sea than over the land. On several occasions it was discovered that the wind was blowing with a velocity of 30 to 40 miles per hour at a height of 1,000 feet when it was almost calm at the surface, and it was generally found that the wind increased slightly with increasing elevation. No sign of any electrical manifestation was ever observed, but means were taken to obviate any interfering cause by electricity.—London Telegraph.

A NOTED MUSICIAN DEAD.

The death of M. Robert Planquette, who made his name and fame with "Les Cloches de Corneville," is announced. He had in his early struggles as a composer.

Strength must be found in thought or it will never be found in the words. Big-sounding words, without thoughts corresponding, are effort without effect.

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

A LESSON TO TALEBEARERS

Preaching on "Talebearing," Rev. Stephen M. Lyons, rector of St. Mary's Church, Salem, N.J., said:—

1. "Talebearing is a species of distraction, and consists in repeating to another what a third person said about him or her. One servant repeats what another servant said about the lady of the house, one clerk carries the remarks made by another to the employer, a neighbor calls to repeat what another neighbor said about you, a relative comes 'to inform you for your good' of course what your mother-in-law or some other relative remarked concerning you. The talebearer professes to be your special friend and brings you the news 'merely to put you on your guard, for your special good.' The word of God and experience teach that talebearers cause untold harm.

"2. The Bible condemns talebearing. Much self-delusion prevails in regard to the baseness and sinfulness of carrying tales. If talebearers would earnestly reflect on the moral incendiarism started in families and in society by the despicable habit of carrying stories they would surely shrink in fear and trembling at the thought of God's judgment awaiting them. The Holy Ghost declares: 'The talebearer shall defile his own soul.'—Eccl. xxi., 31. But our Lord declares nothing defiled shall enter heaven. It is no excuse to say that tales you carried were true. Would you like your conversations and secretfallings repeated to others? Then do not carry tales, and do not listen to talebearers.

"3. Talebearers cause family quarrels, and hatreds between neighbors which continue for years. Indeed envy, jealousy, pride and the desire to create trouble are the motives that actuate talebearers. Servants, laborers, and clerks often lose their positions, storekeepers their customers and physicians their patients by means of the officious talebearers. The greater part of the dissensions, quarrels, hatreds, family feuds, litigations, estrangements and animosities which weigh so heavily on individuals, families and society generally have their beginning in the imprudent or malicious story carried from one to another by some bad tongues. You see a divided household, a dissatisfied family; what is the cause of it all? Some unseen viper's tongue stole in amongst them; discharging its venom in secret. Again, friends are estranged and neighbors are quarrelling; what led to it all? The evil tongue of a third person, whose thoughtless and uncharitable stories have divided their hearts. "The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many."—Eccl. xxviii., 16. Who can tell when the misfortunes brought on families and neighbors by reckless or malicious talebearers will cease? The obligation rests on the talebearers to repair the injuries they have inflicted on their neighbors and relations by their story carrying. 'The whisperer hath troubled many that were at peace.'—Eccl. xxviii., 13. Like Satan with Eve in Paradise story carriers pretend to be your friends. They 'merely come as your friends and tell you for your good what so and so said about you.' But what was said would amount to very little if there were no 'tattlers' and 'wasybodies' to repeat it and turn it into a cause of disturbance. Trifling things are apt to appear important if repeated, and if nearly serious, the injury is greatly increased by repetition. The Bible commands you: 'Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor? Let it die within thee, trusting that it will not burst thee.'—Eccl. xix., 10. How many sins would be avoided, how much family trouble averted if this command were generally obeyed!

"4. Talebearers bring on themselves the curse of God. They cause many sins of strife, hatred, jealousy, revenge, etc., for which they must answer. By their evil tongues they cause Christians to become enemies of God, and to quarrel and hate one another. The Bible declares: 'The death of (a wicked tongue) is a most evil death; and hell is preferable to it.'—Eccl. xxviii., 25. It is soul-terrifying to reflect on the temporal and spiritual ruin wrought by sinful tongues. The Holy Ghost declares: 'Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have perished by their own tongue.'—Eccl. xxix., 22. Our divine Lord came to bring peace to men of good will, but talebearers strive to nullify God's work and hence the Holy Ghost declares: 'The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed, for he hath troubled many that were at peace.'—Eccl. xxix., 15.

"5. Talebearing common. Is there any community without some glibly gossipers, who as the Bible says:

'being idle, learn to go from house to house, tattlers, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not? They make life very miserable for their neighbors and relatives by wilfully misinterpreting innocent words and actions and carrying distorted stories from one house to another. Some of those unlovely and unlovable characters pretend to be religious. Such ones thereby bring true piety into contempt. The keynote to true piety is charity, love of the brethren, a virtue conspicuous for its absence from the doings and sayings of the talebearers. Such ones are distinguished for a close attention to their neighbors' affairs. Perhaps the reason they do not mind their own business is, as a certain humorist has put it: 'Because they have no business to mind. They have no business to mind if they had a mind to mind it, and no mind to mind their business, if they had any business to mind.'

"6. Talebearers make themselves ridiculous and weary their neighbors. The Bible declares: 'The talebearer shall be hated by all.'—Eccl. xxi., 31. One of the ancients used to say that 'the best men were those who spoke least.' If talebearers suffered as much themselves as they make others suffer they would be soon cured. One of the plagues of families and of society is being pestered with those sponge-like natures, always ready to be filled and emptied, from whom the slightest pressure squeezes out all that is in them, until those who are in their neighborhood run the risk of being deluged. Woe to all who have to remain under those dripping eaves!

"7. Resolution. Pray with the Psalmist: 'Set a watch, O God, before my mouth.'—Ps. cxi., 3. Keep a constant watch over your tongue and be as careful in choosing your words as you are in selecting the food you eat and your lives will be free from anguish. 'He that keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from distress.'—Prov. xxi., 23. Daily experience teaches that we cannot take too many precautions to bridle the tongue; frail nature is ever leading us to talk of ourselves and others in a way that is compromising to our consciences and to our interests. 'The silent and wise man shall be honored.'—Eccl. xxi., 31."

Secret Weddings Denounced.

The rector of St. Paul's Church, Jersey City, the Rev. Father Schaecken spoke recently on the question of secret marriages. Father Schaecken has frequently expressed his opinion on this subject, and bitterly denounced them. He says that people contemplating matrimony should come out boldly and make the fact known. "Marriage," he said, "is not a thing to be ashamed of. It is a holy state and something to be proud of, and something that no right thinking people will conceal. Some of our young people seem to think that a secret wedding is a rather romantic affair, and for that reason they are led to plan and carry out these marriages even though they know they are doing wrong. We, of course, cannot expect the young folks to possess the wisdom and discretion of those of more mature years. Young people are more prone to commit foolish acts than older people. This is to a certain extent a matter of nature. However, it behooves the parents of children, and especially those who in their own minds think they are old enough to take upon themselves the responsibilities of matrimony, to impress upon the minds of their offspring the knowledge that a marriage is a most important and serious step, and a step that should be taken only after careful consideration.

"It has been my experience that these marriages contracted without the knowledge of the parents of those entering into the matrimonial state in a majority of instances have turned out unhappily. This is because the young people have much more of the romantic in their make-up than common sense. Before the wedding everything appears rosy. A few weeks of married life and the glamour wears off. Then they both make the discovery that they have made a serious mistake. They are forced to form the conclusion that they are entirely unsuited for each other. Then follows a miserable existence for both of them. The endings of many of these so-called romances are not infrequently sad.

"To prevent as much as possible these secret weddings, clergymen of all denominations should thoroughly investigate all marriage applications. If they, as well as other people who have the right to perform marriage ceremonies, would be a trifle more careful in the matter of promiscuous marrying, there would be a great many less unhappy people in the world."