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LONDON, SATURDAY, OCT. 21, 1921

THE IRISH PEACE CONFERENCE

Since the very inception of peace negotiations, beginning with the formal armistice between the two armies, we have personally been invincibly optimistic as to the outcome.

It is our conviction that the Conference will affect a settlement of the Irish question; and no result of the negotiations is for a moment worthy of that name unless it satisfies the Irish people. This is an elementary truth; it is impossible to think the British Government before deciding upon the Conference can have failed to recognize it with all its implications. The London Nation, while rather querulously finding fault with de Valera's "provocative" language, states this fundamental truth with clarity and precision:

"One thing is perfectly clear," says the Nation, "and that is that no Irish settlement is worth anything unless it is a settlement by consent, and unless the Irish people regard it not as a humiliation, but as an arrangement prompted by a wise sense for the honor and the interests of their nation."

So much taken for granted, it is evident that the bare initiation of negotiations is of stupendous significance.

The fact is that a settlement is imperatively necessary for England; is keenly desired by the Northeast corner which calls itself "Ulster" or "Northern Ireland," and will be welcomed by the Irish people provided it be "an arrangement prompted by a wise sense for the honor and the interests of their nation."

These are the basic facts—or assumptions if you will—on which our optimism is based.

Out-Prussians the Prussians in Ireland was a tremendously costly policy for England. As leading English statesmen and publicists bitterly acknowledged it made her name "stink in the nostrils of the world." An intensely patriotic writer in an English magazine puts it this way:

"It is rather a tragic moment when a man suddenly discovers he is disliked by all his neighbors, particularly tragic if he happens to have been under the impression that to his own terrible cost and undoing he has gone out of his way to help them. . . . It is the tragedy of England today. There is certainly no good denying it. We are at the present moment the nation most disliked by foreign politicians and the Press, not least among our late allies. Perhaps our enemies alone have any sympathy with us, any respect, any understanding of our difficulties or of our ideals."

And this at a time when the problems of foreign policy are pressing, urgent, almost overwhelming; when Egypt is menacing and India seething with discontent that threatens to break into open rebellion; when, despite professions of "Anglo-Saxon" good-will and undying friendship and kinship, the desperate alternative presents itself of alliance with Japan should the friendly cooperation of the United States fail to be secured; in a word, when a thousand pressing reasons make it imperative that England find sympathy, friendship, cooperation among the nations, she finds that she has lost their respect and their confidence, and is both disliked and distrusted. That this is especially true in the United States—where England's need of friend-

ship and cooperation is greatest—no one knows better than the British Government.

This is a terrible price to pay for the utterly stupid and futile as well as utterly barbarous Black and Tan policy in Ireland. Those who were responsible for adopting the Prussian doctrine of frightfulness have had their will and their way; and the result has evidently proved to the British Government that the doctrine is as fallacious as it was seen to be when held by Germans or Austrians.

There is but one alternative to government by brute force, and that is by the consent of the governed. Therefore we believe that England has counted the cost and is prepared to pay the price for peace with Ireland.

There is no longer held the outworn argument that "Ulster" is irreconcilably opposed to the democratic aspirations of Nationalist Ireland, this factitious problem, no longer serving the purpose for which it was created, has ceased to be considered insoluble.

The truth about Northeast Ulster is that the men of brains and of substance have come acutely to realize that, separated from Ireland, Belfast's commerce and industries face ruin. They have found that their political boycott of Ireland was the reason and the justification for Ireland's commercial boycott of Belfast, and the latter boycott, as Sir Philip Gibbs testifies, brought the Ulsterites to their senses. It is of course true that the Orange passion and prejudice, lashed into murderous fury by unscrupulous politicians, can not be so easily allayed; and the position of Sir James Craig is not an easy one. On the one side is the pressure of those who keenly realize that Northeast Ulster is economically united with and its prosperity dependent on the rest of Ireland; on the other, the unreasonable prejudice of the dupes of Carsonism.

In the Northern House of Commons in answer to questions as to his going to London to participate in the Peace Conference, Sir James Craig said:

"The reasons that prompted us to take a decision to attend a conference in Downing Street are as they were then. To refuse would be to leave us open to the gravest misrepresentation across the water. Secondly, I have a feeling that we might be let down behind our backs if there was no one there to say a word for Ulster. Ulster may come out of this very badly. Another important point is that we really have a good case which we need not be ashamed of. We will maintain the attitude we laid down in our letter to Mr. Lloyd George accepting the invitation."

"The second question is one that has been asked on many occasions and answered equally frequently. It is: If we go into a conference are we going to give anything away? I hope the public outside will be really assured that not only have we nothing to give away but that we have no desire, my colleagues and I, to give anything away, and if there was even any suggestion of giving anything away we would call this House together and take them into our confidence. Under no circumstances will anything be done behind the backs of the members of this House or of the backs of the public outside."

There is here an evident desire to keep the door open for effecting that understanding which the commercial and financial interests of Belfast demand and an almost pathetic appeal to the unreasoning prejudice of those who would cut off their nose to spite their face.

"We might be let down behind our backs," "Ulster may come out of this very badly," please let me go, I won't give anything away, at least I won't give anything away behind your backs, I promise to let you know all about it. Please let me go.

The same note of bluster and readiness to back down in a more recent speech suggests the lady whom the poet describes as "vowing that she'd ne'er consent consented."

"My speech was intended to clear the air. Peace will come all the sooner by the facts being understood. A good many people still imagine that Ulster is bargaining, a factor in the situation that is untrue. Ulster bargains for nothing except to be left alone to work out her own destiny. This policy I intend to pursue, undaunted by threats or tempting offers of more liberal terms."

If Sir James had ended right there his declaration would sound very firm and uncompromising, just as he intended it to sound to a part of his constituents. But it does not end there; immediately following there is this significant sentence which plainly intimates that the coy maiden is very willing to be wooed:

"Ulster can only be won; she can never be coerced."

Here a quotation from an English Liberal newspaper is interesting and appropriate:

"Ulster holds a pledge that she will not be coerced, but that is not a pledge that she will be backed up through thick and thin in all opposition to Irish unity. Ulster objects to union with Republican Irishmen and in so doing claims to be serving the Empire. But it will become the duty of Ulster to see whether she is not serving the British Empire best by playing her part as a sentinel of Empire in a united Irish Government."

So you see there are not really "two Irelands," in any case not unless the peace negotiations fail, when the fiction may again become a dogmatic fact.

In a despatch to the Globe and N. Y. Times at the moment of writing, commenting on the fear of the Ulsterites that they will be sacrificed to the desire of settlement we have this remarkable statement:

"All information obtainable in authoritative quarters, however, points to strict adherence by Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues to their Ulster pledges. The opinion is expressed by many persons that it will be possible to construct some plan which, while apparently leaving Ulster untouched, will give such advantages to the South as to compel Ulster to make terms with the South."

Which is one way of "strictly adhering to pledges."

Ireland has through her accredited spokesmen again and again proclaimed her willingness to be at peace with England. The presence of her delegates at the Peace Conference has no other meaning.

What will the terms be? It is impossible to forecast; besides, it is the business of the Irish people themselves to determine them so far as Ireland is concerned.

The stupidly obvious and malevolent propaganda stories of the truce breaking down, of Sinn Féin "extremists," and the like, need cause neither surprise nor alarm. There are those who are bitterly opposed to a settlement. The Morning Post, the mouth-piece of the now discredited faction that tried to quench Irish National aspirations in the blood of the Irish people, is still the spokesman of those who would prevent peace and perpetuate strife. A recent attack on A. W. Cope, Assistant Under-Secretary for Ireland, who is credited with a leading part in bringing about the present Conference, called forth this trenchant criticism from Brigadier-General Crozier in the Daily News:

"In the Morning Post today (October 4) appears a heading, 'Dublin Castle Indicted.' This requires explaining to the ordinary reader. Mr. Cope, who is named in the indictment, has for months seen the futility of the old regime of terror. He played a prominent part in obtaining a truce. Mr. Cope is a civil servant. He is up against the people who do not want a settlement. These people live in Dublin Castle, in Ulster, and in the Strand."

This sidelight on the pernicious activities of the enemies of Ireland and of peace reveals difficulties and dangers; but the Morning Post's faction is, for the time at least, discredited and impotent and the friends of peace—whatever their motives—are in the ascendant.

Nor do we believe that the malevolence of the Morning Post faction—despite the truculence displayed by Lloyd George and some others before the Irish delegates were finally received on a footing of equality—will ever succeed in again renewing the horrors of the last two years of British rule in Ireland. The Magazine writer whom we quoted before suggests one reason:

"But the real dismay that settles on us is not due to the judgment of foreigners, which we have learned to meet with silence, but to the measured judgment of our conscience trained in the traditions of the past. . . . England's name has been invoked to defend crimes against those very laws of political freedom and justice which she has taught the world. They were her gifts to the nations, and she had sinned against her own light."

A great Irishman a hundred years ago put it somewhat differently. Sir Jonah Barrington claimed that Ireland in the rectitude of her just demands was not so hopelessly matched against her mighty oppressor, for despite all material advantages in the struggle the apparently invincible enemy was hampered and weakened by "the timidity of guilt."

England will not again flout civilized opinion, outrage the conscience of her best and most loyal sons, alienate the sympathy and incur the odium of all the nations. That has been found too high a price for Black-and-Tanning Ireland and defeating her object besides.

The alternative is peace. Be it ours to pray with the Holy Father that the Irish Peace Conference will end the age-long dissension to the untold benefit of both England and Ireland.

EDUCATION AND DIRECTION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

By THE OBSERVER

Most of us have, at one time or another, attended a convention of some sort. In these times, when there is much talk of the referendum and the recall as methods of public government, it is interesting to recall our experiences and observations at such conventions.

The convention, in one form or another, is the oldest method for the consideration and decision of public questions. For the first convention, we must go back beyond the days of settled constitutions and parliaments, to the tribal meeting. The first people to hold conventions in North America were the Indians, who were very fond of them. The Iroquois were very strong on conventions; no great question of war or peace was decided without one, or several.

Even at that early date, however, and under those primitive conditions, enough common sense prevailed to put reasonable limits to the power and the proceedings of the tribal and inter-tribal conventions. The Iroquois did not lack a certain rugged common sense; sufficient to see clearly that they must have leaders, and that the leaders must not have their hands tied. They could, and did, rid themselves of an incompetent or untrustworthy chief, once in a while; but while he was chief they did not require him to lay his plans and his projects before the tribal gathering. He was not a delegate; and he did not place his resignation in the hands of a convention before he began to discharge his responsibilities.

The majority of men in Canada have, at some time or other, attended as delegates at some sort of a convention, political, fraternal, religious, temperance, municipal or something. This is the day and age of the convention. Electors, municipal representatives, agricultural societies, insurance agents, automobile salesmen, constables, fire fighters, politicians, lawyers, undertakers, grocers, retail merchants, wholesale merchants, manufacturers, civil engineers, mining engineers, all sorts of engineers, commercial travelers, fraternal societies, temperance societies, pro-liquor sympathizers, and anti-liquor sympathizers, barbers, tailors, workmen of twenty different occupations, railway men, longshoremen, master mariners, good roads leagues, anti-tobacco leagues, leagues for the abolition of capital punishment, children's protection societies, leagues auxiliary to hospitals and to churches, town-planning societies, societies for the protection of birds, game societies, leagues to boost all sorts of possible and impossible things, societies to spread the light, to spread all sorts of light, societies for the redemption of men, women, children, horses and dogs, sheep protection societies, forest protection societies, fire prevention societies, societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and to children, national and racial, and patriotic associations of every sort, kind and description.

They all hold conventions. The money and the time they spend on conventions and on travel assume, in the total, enormous figures. And in nine cases out of ten, the actual

work they do, all the work that is worth doing, originates with a few men in each body; who actually have some ideas to put forward. Those few men really decide the matters; and the bulk of the convention takes guidance from them. Is that not true, upon the observation and experience of most of those who have ever attended a convention? I say, "most," for there are usually a few men at every convention who imagine, being vain, that they have had a great deal to do and have done a great deal; whilst the majority laugh at them and follow the leaders.

Now, in this our own age and time, there are some men who propose that we amend the Constitution of Canada in such a way as to take from Parliament most of its power and transfer it to conventions. Out in Alberta, for instance, it is said that a majority of the Legislature elected last summer placed, when they were nominated, their written resignations in the hands of an association which acts by means of conventions; so that they are, nominally, representatives of the whole people of Alberta, but in reality merely delegates; recallable by a convention; that is to say, recallable by whatever few men may happen to dominate that convention; as a few men do, almost invariably, dominate every convention, everywhere.

No one who knows anything of the rise and progress of our political, representative, democratic institutions, can see without concern this retrogression towards conditions out of which, and above which, our political civilization rose by long and difficult progress. The increasing mania for conventions and for the regulation and control of all things by conventions, is a very powerful reason for our giving more time, money and attention to education. Let us at least have conventions of educated people.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THE concluding paragraph of our Notes last week, where we had written "dissipating faith among non-Catholics," the compositor made us say "Catholics"—an error which though obvious to the careful reader might easily convey a wrong impression to others.

WHATEVER ONE'S political affiliations or predilections, there will be general regret over the withdrawal from active politics, of Mr. Hartley Dewart, Leader of the Liberal Party in the Ontario Legislature for the past two years, and that regret will not be lessened by the knowledge that said retirement has been brought about by impaired health, largely superinduced by unremitting attention to public affairs. To those who know Mr. Dewart it will not be necessary to say that in the discharge of the duties of the responsible position he has so ably filled, his bearing to friend and foe (political) alike has been that of a true gentleman. In that respect, as in others which it is not necessary here to dwell upon, his retirement from the public life of the Province will leave a vacancy it will not be easy to fill.

THAT the age of Martyrs and Confessors is not past is proven by the conduct of native Chinese Catholics in a recent affair in that little-known land. The news which has just come from Ichang, of the death by violence of twenty-nine Chinese Catholics, will give new life to missionary endeavor. The massacre took place in a pagan temple in Shu Sha Wu, a town on the borders of Hupeh and Szechwan, where a group of fanatics, under a self-styled "Ta Han King," had taken advantage of the disturbed state of the country, during the famine, to incite animosity against the Christians. The twenty-nine who have just sealed their faith with their blood, were dragged from their homes and taken to the temple where, under threat of death, they were commanded to offer incense to the "Living Buddha," and upon their refusal to do so were slaughtered upon the spot. Thus is the history of God's Church repeated from age to age.

It is interesting to note that for the first time in the history of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the sceptre for the time being has passed from the city of Lyons, France, the Society's birth-place, and for the year 1920 goes to

the United States. In the matter of contributions the distinction of heading the list for the year belongs to Boston, New York and Philadelphia, in the order named, though the premiership in total contributions for the past ninety-nine years—the period of the Society's existence—still remains with Lyons. The total amount received at the central office at Lyons last year was over nine million francs, or close on \$4,000,000, and of this France contributed \$444,611, which, considering the financial state of the country after a war which well-nigh ruined it, is indeed remarkable. It goes to show that the missionary spirit of the French people is still very much alive, and that with the gradual rehabilitation of the nation, even the United States with its vastly greater wealth and population will have to look to its newly-won laurels as the mainstay of missionary enterprise. And, it may be added, Catholic contributions to such an object are not given, as some others, to "boost business."

A CASE of hardship, which came under our observation the other day, in which a poor widow who, to tide over an evil day had pawned a treasured heir-loom and but for eleventh-hour assistance would have lost it permanently, caused once more in our mind regret that in this country there is no institution such a may be found abroad, where, under religious auspices, temporarily embarrassed people may pledge their belongings at moderate interest, with assurance that in the event of deferred better days they will not be harshly dealt with or suffer permanent loss of a treasured belonging. In these trying days especially such an institution becomes a necessity in populous communities, and the fact that in this continent there is nothing to correspond with the Mont-de-Piété in France—to name only one—is legitimate matter for regret.

HOW VERY few ever stop to reflect that a Saint of the Church—St. Bernardine of Siena—the pawn shop owes its origin. And to this day in France, Italy and other countries, even though the State has stepped in and taken possession, the pawn shop still retains many of its original characteristics, and is looked upon as a great public benefaction. In France, for example, the Marquis de Guerry, who died several years ago, left a legacy of some twenty thousand dollars for the redemption of objects pledged by the poor in Paris pawn shops. Again, when M. Santos-Dumont, the pioneer in heavier-than-air navigation, won the M. Deutsch de la Meurthe prize of a like sum he set aside half the amount for the same purpose. From which it may be inferred that notwithstanding State usurpations the spirit of St. Bernardine still survives in France. That it should cross the Atlantic and find lodgment in the great English-speaking countries of this Northern Hemisphere is among the greatest desiderations of the hour.

SAYS THE Christian Guardian (Methodist): "In the Philippines La Defensa and El Bolentin, two Roman Catholic papers, have come out vigorously against the Public school, which they stamp as 'godless,' 'unpatriotic,' 'immoral,' 'a cancer which saps the very vitality of the race,' 'a pernicious system,' etc. Let us clearly understand that in the Philippines, in the United States, and in Canada, the Roman Church stands opposed to the Public schools. It is well that the people of Canada should bear in mind this fact when our Roman Catholic friends are seeking to establish Separate schools upon a firmer basis. The Roman Church is the enemy of the Public school and would gladly destroy it if she could." Which is the best proof, if any additional were needed, that in dealing with Catholics the Guardian evidently considers it can afford to dispense with the Ninth (Eighth) Commandment.

WATCH AND PRAY

Dublin, Oct. 5.—Evidence that the situation in Belfast is being purposely aggravated to embarrass the prospects of settlement between Ireland and England are being given daily. Protestant workmen are expelling their Catholic fellow workmen from their jobs at the point of the revolver.

Ireland as a whole is obeying Episcopal advice to observe silence at the present juncture of negotiations and leave everything in the

hands of the nation's spokesmen.

October being the month of the Rosary, the people are offering daily prayers that their hopes may be realized.

The fact that both sides are to meet without surrender of any principle has caused great satisfaction in Ireland, as it was evident that only on these free and unconditional lines would the conferences be at all possible. While grave difficulties are certain to arise, it seems certain that no subject, except possibly that of the northern counties, can imperil the conference.

BOY LIFE

THE BOY AND HIS FAILINGS

(Adapted from J. S. Kitley's "That Boy of Yours")

His failings are exclusively his. He owns them but seldom owns up to them. Some are due to his immaturity and will disappear with the passing of infantile diseases, warts and freckles and childish features, unless they are fixed by some foolish older person, who insists that passing phases of his development are permanent forms of depravity and succeeds in turning the changing hues into fast colours, all red. That boy showed his quality who defined a hypocrite as "A boy wot comes to school wid a smile on his face." Some of his feelings are due to his being an immature being, some to being an immature man, and the latter will not slough off at all. We have to classify them as among his unavoidable limitations, not to be outlawed, but to be harnessed up and put to work drawing his personality through bogs and over mountains. We are not to look on them as hopeless liabilities but as productive endowments. And yet they will always be idiosyncracies if not faults.

He is often tortured with the feeling of being misunderstood. He is rebuffed for his humorous tendencies. A gentleman, just alighting from the cars, said to a boy, "May I ask you how far it is to the Palmer house?" The youth replied, "You may do so this time, but you must never, never do it again." He was probably misunderstood and called impudent when he was only a humorist.

There are four kinds of bad boys: The boy who is called bad without really being thought so: the boy who is both called and considered bad, but is not so: the boy who really is bad, but was almost compelled to be so: the boy who is bad in spite of all efforts to make him good.

The boy of the first class is almost sure to become bad, and to move down into the third class. To call him bad is very apt to make him so, unless he is a boy of a very fine sense of humour, or has enough good sense to see that the accusation is meaningless, a mere effort on the part of some folk to seem virtuous, or an exhibition of unregulated playfulness. The problem is not what to do with the boy, but what in the world to do with people as old as they are who think and talk so. The penitentiary would be a little too severe; so would the workhouse. A reformatory would be about right and the feeble-minded institute would be just the thing. "A House of Correction for Idiotic Parents," would be useful for each county.

The boy of the second class, both called and considered bad when he is not, is abundant. He is considered bad because he has not learned the artistic and emotional adaptation of his voice to the indoor life; because he celebrates Halloween and April Fool's day as often as he can; because he has not learned to refrain from wearing out his trousers where you don't want him to wear them out; because he does not show respect for the one who calls him bad; because it is easier for that one to call him bad, and thus dispose of the question, without the necessity of careful discrimination. Having classified him that way one can go on and treat him accordingly, for it never seems worth while to try to do anything with a "bad boy." "Idiotic" is not just the word for such folk. Perhaps the word "brutal" is not as scientific and colourless as required. If the boy does not become bad it is not their fault, while often he has the finest elements and sentiments to be wished for in a boy.

The boy of the third class would rather be good, if you should put it to a final vote, but in spite of himself, he has been made bad. Called and considered and treated as bad, he at last says: "It is in-