

# East and West

A couple of editorials headed respectively, "A Golden Opportunity Lost" and "Friend Wallace" appeared in last March 25th Winnipeg "Free Press." The first is as follows: "Mr. Meighen is much acclaimed by his friends for his courage, his national outlook, his disregard for sectional appeals, etc., etc. He lost a golden opportunity for displaying these qualities when at the French Conservative dinner at Montreal on Saturday, he did not say a word in season to Armand Lavergne about his abusive and untrue references to the West. Sectionalism, of a particularly dangerous kind, appears to be becoming the outstanding feature of the Conservative appeal." The second editorial runs thus: "Mr. Wallace, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, is about to resign because President Coolidge declines to support the McNary bill, which is in fact his child. Mr. Sapiro, in his recent trip to Western Canada, spoke quite openly about the purpose of this measure as set forth to him by Mr. Wallace himself. It was to slaughter the United States surplus of wheat in the world's market at prices so low that it would force Canadian farmers to stop growing wheat for export. 'I have told Wallace to his face' said Mr. Sapiro, 'that this is an inhuman and stupid plan.' Mr. Wallace seems to be a kind, generous friendly sort of neighbor."

What with Canadian differences on racial, language and religious questions, and Western threats of secession over the East's holding-up of the Hudson Bay Railway, the above first quotation seems to support Kipling's contention that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet;" while the second editorial completes the full round of the compass by justifying the remark that North is North and South is South and never the twain shall meet. Yet looking at the second emanation from the editorial brain, it really shows an agreement between North and South that forecasts not only the probability of unity between East and West, but even the probability of universal human brotherhood.

It is the two names—Wallace and McNary—that arouse a tremendous train of reflections, which carries us back across the Atlantic to a comparatively small country called Scotland. "Wallace," as the patronymic of the hero of the Scottish war for national independence from English domination, is world famous. The other name that attention is directed towards, is McNary; but apart from the fact that the "Mc" portion thereof indicates a Celtic origin, there is nothing else, so far as the writer is aware, that renders that name remarkable. The whole point is that for material reasons, a Wallace and a McNary reveal themselves as friends and brothers in a common (not to say vicious) cause. That is equal to saying that a Highlander and Lowlander by origin, possess two hearts that beat as one.

Yet, between these two inhabitants or races in former times in Scotland, such unity was a very unusual event; for we may say that Wallace is a name of truly Saxon origin. It is said to come from the Teutonic word "waelsch" which, in modern German, means foreign, outlandish or—Italian! but as used by the Anglo-Saxon invaders was applied by them to the Cymric Celts whom they supplanted and drove into the West of England; and then, to add insult to injury, had the impudence to call them the "Welsh" (foreigners). But the Wallaces of Scotland were for centuries, to all intents and purposes entirely "Sassenach" (Gaelic for Saxon) and titled Laids, i.e., landlords, of the Lowland portion of that country. That modern fervent expression of German nationalism "The Watch on the Rhine" still contains the above term; for after saying that as long as a drop of blood animates the Teutons and they can aim the rifle and seize the sword, its author swears "betritt kein Waelscher deinen Strand"—no foreigner shall soil the banks of the Rhine. Well, that German poet was a little hasty in his prophecy because, amidst a very badly mixed up

situation, there are all kinds of Waelschers these days, not to mention "welshers" (English slang for dead-beats) bestriding the Rhineish strand!

So, as above said, we find a Lowland Wallace and a Celtic McNary figuring as brothers-in-arms. It was not always thus and few have better expressed this fact than R. L. Stevenson in one of his essays entitled "The Foreigner at Home," his object being to reveal how, within Britain itself, the native inhabitants of the different parts of that country are practically foreigners to the other natives. Of the Highland Celts, he says, writing in 1881: "A century and a half ago the Highlander wore a different costume, spoke a different language, worshipped in another church, held different morals and obeyed a different social constitution from his fellow-countrymen either of the south or north. Even the English, it is recorded, did not loathe the Highlander and the Highland costume as they were loathed by the remainder of the Scotch. Yet the Highlander felt himself a Scot. He would willingly raid into the Scotch lowlands; but his courage failed him at the border and he regarded England as a perilous, unhomely land. When the Black Watch, after years of foreign service, returned to Scotland, veterans leaped out and kissed the earth, at Port Patrick. They had been in Ireland, stationed among men of their own race and language, where they were well liked and treated with affection. But it was the soil of Galloway that they kissed at the extreme end of the hostile Lowlands, among a people who did not understand their speech and who had hated, harried and hanged them since the dawn of history."

Another Lowland Scot, Robert Burns, whose features, mind and temperament, however, proclaim him and his genius to have been more than three parts Celtic, was several times moved to mention matters Highland. When improvements in his financial condition made it possible, he made a tour through the Highlands and his treatment in one inn drew great praise from him about the virtues of a "Highland Welcome," whilst the incivility he received in another inn through having been neglected in favor of visitors to the titled chief of the historically atrocious Campbell clan, caused him to pass remarks on the country and people which were the very reverse of complimentary—thus providing a perfect illustration of the Heraclitian and Hegelian dialectics of variability of all things, including personal opinions!

In one of his songs, written to fit a Celtic tune, the poet condenses into its three verses the social characteristics of the Scottish Celt, but as its Scots dialect is rather thick both in quantity and quality, it must be paraphrased as describing a Highland mother singing to her babe. She tells him that her gay chief knows well who was the father of her young "Highland thief" and wishes a blessing on the child's pretty neck because, if he should live to grow up, he'd steal a horse (and like many others of his fellows, get hung for so doing), and travel through and through the country and perhaps lead home an English cow. The mother next prays that her child may fare through the Lowlands and over the Scots border into England; then, after harrying the skunks of these low countries, return home to her and the Highlands. But despite their mode of living and like "the noble Red Man" of this continent, the Celts have always been remarkable for their romantic, imaginative and courteous nature. And, after all, when the Lowlands were stolen from, they were merely getting back some of their own medicine; for, especially among the Scots border "moss-troopers" cattle-stealing by moon-light was their regular business.

Burns' poem supports some of Marx's statements upon "the brave Gaels" in Capital, vol. I, chap. 27, in connection with the Highland embezzlements or clearances, when the people were expropriated from their commonly-owned lands—a relic of the old

Primitive Communist stage of human evolution. As Marx says, each clan was the owner of the land it was settled on; the clan chief being merely the nominal owner. But after the failure of the largely Highland Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, the clan heads degenerated into Lowland landlords by, on their own authority, transforming their nominal rights to the land into a right of private property. The worst example of this, was furnished by the Duchess of Sutherland who, by the aid of the British soldiers, appropriated 794,000 acres of clan lands, the operation involving the burning to death of an old woman who had refused to leave her hut. Truly does Marx speak of this as but a short deviation from the Highland practices of robbing and murdering the Lowlanders and also their fellow Celtic rival clans, which at times took the form of setting fire to a thatched-roof church while women and children were worshipping therein and destroying every person, only themselves to be in turn put to the sword when the clansmen's relatives returned—all of which was ruthless enough to delight the soul of ex-Kaiser Bill, the late Andrew Carnegie or other disciples of Nietzscheanism!

And yet, what confusion among modern Scots and non-Scots prevails upon the Highland and Lowland matters! For example, open-air band concerts in Scotland are usually rendered with brass and wood-wind, etc., instruments, but very often also varied by interludes of bravely marching-up-and-down Highland-costumed bagpipers. During one of the seasons, an Englishman in Glasgow was reckless enough to write a local evening paper that he enjoyed the band music à la Wagner, Rossini, Sousa, etc., but begged that he and the public be spared (what the Scots called) the "Kiltie bawnd" features! The venomously ferocious and taunting replies that that unthinking and unfortunate "Southron" received from Scots patriots were well-nigh unprintable and had the latter been able to lay hands on the man, Lynch law would have been mild compared to his probable fate! Yet, if the Lowland Scottish opponents of the Englishman had been acquainted with the real history of their race and part of the country, they would have had much more reason to detest the kilts and bagpipes than had the man at whom they hurled their insults.

Similarly, one reads periodically in Scots journals great arguments "about it and about"—as to the respective importance and superior merits of Highlanders and Lowlanders, their languages, geniuses and country, and even suggestions that the Highlanders are not Scots at all. Fact is, both Celts and Saxons in Scotland, having like the British and French Canadians, dispossessed the original inhabitants, each has as much "right" as the others to be called Scots or Canadians. Again, as regards exploitation of national peculiarities, when Lowland Scots vaudeville comedians and gramophone manufacturers' record furnishers desire to be particularly Caledonian, they invariably appear "in the Garb of Old Gaul" even when they substitute the fur pouch worn in front of the kilt by a painter's kalsomining brush!

Is it possible that any other than the British people carry national sectionalism to a greater point of abuse? The English have their Sons of England societies, the Scots their St. Andrew's society and then the different shires and even towns have their separate organisations, as well as the Scotch and Welsh Celts; and yet none of the groups is composed of an unmixed race that does not include elements from the others. In fact, it is these judicious mixtures that are the very salvation of the different sections viewed as a whole, and counteract sectional inferiorities and one-sidedness. This applies equally to the French, etc., as to the British. It was not so long ago that a French Canadian (supposedly one of the Latin groups) said it was dangerous to attempt to trample on their liberties, because his race

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