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LONDON, SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1917

## THE CITIZEN AND SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

Recently we quoted a fearless and outspoken editorial of the Ottawa Citizen on the Irish question. If a later editorial in the same paper is from the same pen the writer has become curiously befuddled as to the facts of the case, and is now apparently convinced that the proper thing for Irishmen to do is to aim at nothing in particular, but to shoot up the landscape generally. It bears, we are inclined to think, the earmarks of another member of the staff who sees in "clericalism" the deadly foe to all freedom of thought and human progress which would otherwise usher in the millennium and cure all the ills that flesh is heir to by single tax on land values.

When he runs amok it is not easy to follow him. His concluding paragraph will give some idea of the difficulty:

"Irish spokesmen in Canada are speaking out against the Imperial government's policy of oppression in Ireland; and so it should be denounced, just as much as the late Russian government's treatment of Finland, or the German government's of Poland. When, however, are the Canadian champions of Ireland ever so bold as to speak out regarding junkerdom nearer home? Land monopoly and financial imperialism have been fastened upon Canada. Whether it is designated a duke or a trust company, as a land syndicate or a railway franchise, whether calling itself Russian or German or Imperial or Canadian, it is junkerdom; and there is plenty of it in Canada to provide texts for champions of liberty and justice."

Well call it a duke for short. Dukes are not common in Canada, though it must be admitted that we are rapidly approaching that bad eminence. So it is perhaps just as well that we get after a duke "whether it calls itself Russian or German or Imperial or Canadian." A duke! While giving him every latitude so far as nationality is concerned, thus avoiding any charge of being personal, let us boldly proclaim of the duke—"it is junkerdom." Now what are we to do with the duke? The champions of liberty and justice are looking for leadership.

The Citizen has unlimited admiration for Sir Horace Plunkett though its information is limited to some vague notions as to his work which the Citizen writer is quite convinced he carried on in spite of the opposition or culpable indifference of "clericalism and political parties."

Sir Horace Plunkett is a great patriotic, thorough-going Irishman whose name is associated with a movement that has done wonders in the regeneration of agricultural Ireland. He is a Unionist and a Protestant; two other branches of the family are Catholic, to one of which belong the victims of that name of the Easter Rising a year ago. Sir Horace is none the less Irish because of difference of religion and politics. But to look upon Sir Horace Plunkett as having initiated and carried out this movement singlehanded, as it were, and even in spite of "organized clericalism" and "the Nationalist political machine" is grossly to overstate the important work he was instrumental in accomplishing, indeed absurdly to misrepresent a work which was and is based fundamentally and essentially on cooperation.

The bureaucratic government of Ireland consists of an endless number of Boards—forty five or more. The Board of Agriculture had the unique distinction of coming into being on the demand of the Irish people them-

selves, designed by Irishmen to meet Irish needs. Its success is one of the unanswerable arguments for Home Rule.

In 1895, on the invitation of Horace Plunkett, a committee was nominated by the leaders of the various Irish parties. These nominees were to invite to join them any Irishmen whose capacity, knowledge or experience might be of service to the Committee irrespective of the political party or religious persuasion to which they might belong. "Mr. John Redmond," writes Sir Horace Plunkett, "joined the Committee and acted throughout in a manner which was broad, statesmanlike, conciliatory, and as generous as it was courageous."

"Truly," continues Sir Horace, "it was a strange council over which I had the honor to preside. All shades of politics were there—Lords Mayo and Montague, Mr. Dane and Sir Thomas Lea, (Tories and Liberal Unionist Peers and Members of Parliament) sitting down beside Mr. John Redmond and his parliamentary followers. It was found possible, in framing proposals fraught with moral, social, and educational results to secure the cordial agreement of the late Rev. Dr. Kane, Grand Master of Belfast Orangemen, and of the eminent Jesuit educationist, Father Thomas Finlay, of the Royal University. The O'Connor Don, the able Chairman of the Financial Relations Commission, and Mr. John Ross, M. P., now one of His Majesty's Judges, both Unionists, were balanced by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and Mr. T. C. Harrington, M. P., both Nationalists. . . . Mr. T. P. Gill (Nationalist) besides undertaking investigation of the utmost value into State aid to agriculture in France and Denmark, acted as Hon. Secretary to the Committee of which he was a member."

In a year's time, August 1896, the Committee issued a Report recommending a new Department of Government with a minister directly responsible to Parliament at its head. Before the end of the year (1896) a deputation, representing all the leading agricultural and industrial interests of the country, waited upon the Irish Government, to press upon them the urgent need of the new department. It was not until April 1900, however, that the plan was put into effect, with Sir Horace Plunkett, the first President of the new Board, the first minister of an Irish Department of government directly responsible to Parliament. "When a Nationalist member met a Tory member of the Recess Committee he laughed over the success with which they had wheeled a measure of Industrial Home Rule out of a Unionist government."

This is the genesis of the Irish Department of Agriculture as told by Sir Horace Plunkett himself. Where, in does he indicate "the obstruction and undermining tactics from the Nationalist political machine?"

Let Sir Horace continue to tell the story:

"The very nature of the work which the Department was called into existence to accomplish made it absolutely essential that it should keep in touch with the classes whom the work would most immediately affect and without whose cooperation no lasting good could be achieved. The machinery for this purpose was provided by the establishment of a Council of Agriculture and two Boards, one of the latter being concerned with agriculture, rural industries and inland fisheries, the other with technical instruction. . . . The Council of Agriculture consists of two members appointed by each County Council (Cork being regarded as two counties, and returning two members), making in all sixty-eight persons. The Department also appoint one from each county. . . . The advisory powers of the Boards are very real, for the expenditure of all moneys out of the Endowment funds is subject to their concurrence. Hence they might largely force their own views upon the Department by refusing to sanction the expenditure of money upon any of the Department's proposals until these were so modified as to be practically their own proposals. It is therefore clear that the machinery can only work harmoniously and efficiently so long as it is moved by the right spirit. . . . I need not fear contradiction at the hands of a single member of either Board when I say that up to the present, perfect harmony has been shown throughout. The utmost consideration has been shown by the Boards for the difficulties which the Department have to overcome."

Sir Horace is eloquent in praise of the hearty cooperation of all classes of the people. He would not have been surprised if the average man had regarded it as "Another Castle Board" and pass on with a shrug. But the Irish people "were never for a moment in doubt as to its real

meaning and purpose. They meant to make it their own and utilize it in the uplifting of their country." From the first there was a "torrent of business" which later made orderly channels for itself.

Now just a word more from Sir Horace on what the Citizen calls "organized clericalism."

"And if my optimism ever wavers, I have but to think of the noble work that many priests are doing, often in remote and obscure parishes, in the teeth of innumerable obstacles. I call to mind at such times, as pioneers in the great awakening, men like the eminent Jesuit, Father Thomas Finlay, Father Hegarty of Erris, Father O'Donovan of Loughrea, and many others—men with whom I have worked and taken counsel, and who represent an ever increasing number of their fellow priests."

"I may mention that of the co-operative societies organized by the Irish Agricultural Organization Society there are no fewer than 331 societies of which the local priests are Chairmen, while to my own knowledge during the summer and autumn of 1902, as many as 50,000 persons from all parts of Ireland were personally conducted over the exhibit of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction at the Cork Exhibition by their local clergy. Again, in a great number of cases the village libraries which have been recently started in Ireland with the assistance of the Department (the books consisting largely of industrial, economic, and technical works on agriculture), have been organized and assisted by the Roman Catholic clergy."

All this is found in Sir Horace Plunkett's book, "Ireland and the New Century," published three years after the Department of Agriculture came into operation.

In due course Sir Horace went out with the Government of which he was a member, but the work went right on. Father Finlay, S. J., is still the soul of the I. A. O. S., which is the life and inspiration of the whole work. Organized clericalism and Nationalist politicians are still working faithfully and zealously to promote and perpetuate the good work. And Sir Horace, in 1912, then many years an outsider, wrote in the Atlantic Monthly:

"So far we have about a thousand farmers' cooperative associations, with nearly a hundred thousand members, mostly heads of families, and consequently embracing nearly half a million of the population. The actual turnover for 1909 was about twelve million dollars. We regard the movement as being only in its infancy."

"I could cite instances where agricultural cooperative associations, composed of individuals generally regarded as hopelessly unprogressive have displayed in business, in politics, and in the promotion of education, qualities which, if applied to the more opulent circumstances of the agricultural community in the United States, would place American farming in a higher position than it occupies to-day."

The whole story is well worth the Citizen's study. It has its lessons for Canada. The insignificant little clash of political ideals, in which Sir Horace Plunkett's party thought to kill Home Rule by kindness, does not deprive the story of lessons which the most patriotic Canadian might be proud to see learned and applied in Canada. The anti-clerical, the anti-Irish, the anti-Home Ruler will search in vain for any argument for his favorite thesis in Sir Horace Plunkett's experience in Ireland.

## A POST-WAR PROBLEM

"Prince Albert, Sask., March 29.—Practically every window in the front of the Prince Albert police station is broken as the result of an attack upon it by about 150 soldiers of the local battalion last night, in resentment for frequent arrests and fining of the men of the battalion for violations of the liquor act. The men surrounded the building and threw sticks of wood from a nearby pile through the windows. Eventually Lieut. Col. J. E. Bradshaw, M. L. A., and Major Smith succeeded in restoring order. The trouble is the culmination of a series of arrests of soldiers by the city police and the infliction of heavy fines. In many cases the soldiers claim the evidence was flimsy and the penalties unwarranted. Lieut. Col. Bradshaw and the other officers of the battalion are emphatic in the denunciation of the treatment handed out to the soldiers by the police."

To reflecting people it has often occurred that when the War is over and the many millions of fighting men return to their respective countries there will be short work made of the injustices and inequities of pre-war conditions. Men who have endured the hell of modern warfare will not cover before a policeman's baton. Men who were called upon or compelled to die if necessary for their country are going to demand a right to live decently in that country. There may be, there probably will be,

excesses on the part of returned soldiers in the assertion of what they conceive to be their rights. The despatch from Prince Albert, above quoted, may be an example. Lawlessness can not be tolerated; but the country will be none the worse in the end for the virile influence of four hundred thousand returned soldiers dispersed throughout the length and breadth of the land. In this instance it is worthy of note that it is not merely the common soldiers, in whose ranks there might be lawless individuals, but "Lieut. Col. Bradshaw and the other officers, who are emphatic in their denunciation of the treatment handed out to the soldiers by the police." It used to be considered right and proper to object to paternal legislation as incompatible with our political ideals; now maternal government is growing in favor in Canada. Men who have fought the battle of freedom in Europe will resent being tied to the W. C. T. U. apron strings in Canada. Nor will they allow the R. I. C. spirit to govern police action.

## THE BRITISH BOURBOIS

In the interest of peace and good will between the peoples of Ireland and England, to prevent a natural feeling of resentment on the part of the Irish race everywhere against England's unfair and unjust treatment of Ireland developing into an antipathetic prejudice alike to both races, and to the best interests of civilization, we have never ceased to keep before our readers the vital distinction between the people of England and the English ruling classes.

We make no apology for again reproducing the following extract from an article by the eminent English author, Mr. H. G. Wells:

"You are proposing to loosen the grip of a certain narrow and limited class upon British affairs; and you propose it as though it were a job as easy as rearranging railway fares or sending a van to Calais. That is the problem that every decent Englishman is trying to solve today, every man of that Greater Britain which has supplied these five million volunteers, these magnificent temporary officers and all this wealth of munitions. And the oligarchy is so invincibly fortified! Do you think it will let in Frenchmen to share its controls? It will not even let in Englishmen."

"It holds the class schools; the class universities; the examinations for our public services are its class shibboleths; it is the church, the squires, the permanent army class, permanent officialdom; it makes every appointment; it is the fountain of honor; what it does not know is not knowledge; what it cannot do must not be done. It rules India as its back garden; it will wreck the Empire rather than relinquish its ascendancy in Ireland. It is densely self-satisfied and instinctively monopolistic. It is on our backs; and with it on our backs, we common English must bleed and blunder to victory."

On the first page of this issue we reproduce a special cable to The Globe by Robert Donald, editor of the Daily Chronicle, one of the leading papers of England. Here again the truth we have desired to bring home to our readers is emphasized.

It is interesting to note that the English editor confirms to the letter T. P. O'Connor's diagnosis of the situation published in these columns a few weeks ago. The reactionaries chafe under the leadership of the Radical Lloyd George and they believed that an election would make him their servant. They succeeded in making him stultify himself on the question of Home Rule and thereby weakened him enormously not only in Ireland, but especially in Great Britain.

The blustering threat of Bonar Law to have an election on the issue of Irish obstruction met such a reception that he hurriedly backed down. It is not at all certain, however, that the issue of the negotiations on the Irish question may not be so contrived as to make it possible for the reactionaries to realize their desire for a War election.

Kitchener's army, says Mr. Donald, will smash old party shibboleths. It is sometimes pointed out that the oligarchy have done their share in the War; that the casualty lists contain more than a due proportion of aristocratic names. Well, no one suggests that they are cowards; they monopolized the Army in time of peace; they could hardly get under when war broke out.

The Irish question is, of course, to them only a political weapon, to be discarded when no longer useful; but there are evidences that it is considered still to have great potentialities.

And their unscrupulous use of it may be fraught with great danger. It is a time that imperatively demands self control on the part of the Irish people at home and abroad if they are not to play into the hands of their inveterate enemies.

## OUR OLD PEOPLE

It is remarkable how large a number of old persons, many of them octogenarians, pass away in the month of March. They linger on through the cold of winter and then, when spring is at hand and the days are growing warmer, the cord of life gives way. We suppose that our medical men could give a reason for this; but it has often occurred to us that it was in answer to their prayer to die in the month dedicated to him who expired in the arms of Jesus and Mary. It is certainly a great favor for them to reach Purgatory just before the great Day of Atonement; for it is an augury that they may share in the joys of the Resurrection.

Nothing, perhaps, affords a more instructive contrast between the Christian and the pagan view of life than the attitude of believing and that of unbelieving people towards the aged and the infirm. In the judgment of the world, when a man can no longer enjoy the pleasures of life, when he becomes dependent upon the care or charity of others, it were better for him if he were dead. In fact there are those who suggest that such persons should be gently removed, so that they might not be a burden upon their relatives or the State. We can quite understand why the ox or the horse that has outlived its usefulness should be dispatched; for it was made for man's benefit and, when it ceases to serve that purpose, there is no longer any reason why it should exist. It is indeed pathetic to see a faithful dumb beast, with the marks of toil upon its shoulders, standing neglected by the roadside, unstable and unkept. But there is a much sadder sight than that. It is that of the man, old and bent with years of labor, unconscious or unmindful of his immortal destiny, still clinging to life after the power to enjoy it has passed, preferring rather a cold, wretched, weary existence in this world than the blank uncertainty of the tomb.

We were once accosted by an old man who eked out a living on a small and not too fertile bit of soil. "Do you know," said he, "anything about hidden treasures?" "What kind of treasures do you mean, my good man?" said we. "Do you mean heavenly treasures or earthly treasures?" "Oh," he replied with a wave of his hand, "I mean earthly treasures. Heavenly treasures may be all very good but I am not particularly interested in them. The reason I ask you," he continued, "is because there is a pot of gold buried in this field, and every time I dig for it the spirits move it. I heard that a certain priest—mentioning him by name—had power over the spirits, and I was wondering if he would come here and hold them until I got that gold." The world would call that man crazy, and no doubt he was; but was he any more foolish than are thousands of others who, with one foot in the grave, are wholly concerned about earthly treasures, that are as elusive as that pot of gold.

But to return to our own old people, there are first of all those who, though their hair is white with age, still retain the heart of youth. Those good old grandmothers who love to linger near the tabernacle, whose words are words of wisdom and who enjoy the affection and the confidence of their children and grandchildren—they offer no problem, for their presence breathes a benediction; they are the guardian angels of the hearth.

Poles apart from these is another class whose lives were none too edifying, who, in the days of their health and strength, did little for Church or State and who are now dependent upon one or the other for their maintenance. Perhaps they experience a change of heart, but judging by their outward demeanor, one would be sometimes led to conclude that they are not amenable to the good influences that surround them. At all events they afford to others the opportunity of exercising unadulterated charity.

What we have especially in mind are those old people, who, either through long infirmity or their isolated condition in life, are scarcely in touch with the world about them. The generation that is growing up

scarcely knows of their existence. They are the recluses of the world, separated from it more securely than by cloistered walls. Of such Father Faber has written:

What end doth he fulfill?  
He seems without a will,  
Stupid, unhelpful, helpless, age-worn man!

He hath let the years pass,  
He hath toiled and heard Mass,  
Done what he could, and now does what he can.

There are Catholics who do not see any benefit to be derived from these long years of inactivity. The same people cannot appreciate the advantages of the cloister and its life of prayer and atonement. If an infirm person is a blessing to a home or to a community, as saints have attested, those years that seem so wasted in the eyes of the world are golden years for the aged invalid himself. How many acts of atonement, resignation and detachment does he not offer up daily! He is given plenty of time to be weaned from the world and to realize its vanity. As the light of his eyes grows dimmer, as the shadows begin to lengthen and the sunset of life draws near, the light of faith in his soul grows brighter. And when the last Sacraments are administered, people wonder at the peaceful calm and brightness of that countenance that had recently been so convulsed with pain. It is the first morning rays of the sun of God's eternal day that is beginning to shine upon him.

THE GLEANER.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE MONTH of March marked the completion of the fourth year of the Father Fraser Chinese Mission Fund. It had its inception in a review in these columns of the work accomplished by the zealous missionary up to that time, and a reminder to the Catholics of Canada that the onus lay upon them of holding up their hands, and enabling him by their practical cooperation to take advantage of the opportunities which the changing internal affairs of the Chinese Empire opened before him. Following upon this appeal, the proprietor of the CATHOLIC RECORD, the late Senator Coffey, opened the Fund and placed the columns of the paper at its disposal.

THE FIRST response to this appeal was from His Grace, the Archbishop of Toronto, who, while giving it his cordial approval, himself headed the list with one hundred dollars. In doing so His Grace wrote: "Your appeal in behalf of Father Fraser's missionary work is timely and deserving of generous response. He is, I think, the only Ontario priest doing mission work in China, and he is doing it successfully. After ten years of zealous labor he has been advanced to a more responsible position, and the CATHOLIC RECORD deserves our thanks for making it practically possible for all of us to have some share in the merit of his work."

OF THE efficacy of the Archbishop's good example readers of the RECORD have had practical evidence before them for four years. From small early contributions the Fund has grown, and interest in it extended, until now, as our columns week by week bear witness, offerings come daily from every part of Canada. With this issue the total passes the ten thousand mark—not, perhaps, a great sum in itself when contrasted with the vastness of the missionary field in China, but great, let us hope, in its promise of interest and obligation with regard to the extension of God's Kingdom on earth. What that ten thousand dollars has meant to Father Fraser's mission only the Last Day will reveal. The purchasing power of a dollar in China is three or four times what it is in Canada, and contributors to the Fund have full assurance that every dollar is made to go its full limit in the good missionary's hands.

WITH THE OPENING of the fifth year of the Fund, let our readers not imagine that the urgency of the work is in any degree lessened. Father Fraser has under God's blessing accomplished much, but weighed in the balance with the possibilities before him, which may well appal any one man or group of men, he has little more than begun. There are many other Catholic missionaries in China, and the result of their labors for the past fifty years is full of consolation. They alone, of all bearing the Christian name, have been able to make any impress upon the

Empire. But when it is remembered that out of a population of over 400,000,000, Catholics number about 2,000,000 only, the vastness of the field may be realized. Since the outbreak of the Great War the ranks of the missionaries have been greatly depleted, so that upon those who remain the burden bears very heavily.

FATHER FRASER calls for assistance in men as well as in money from Canada, and his appeal should not fall upon deaf ears. What more inspiring vocation can open to any man than to have a part in the Christianizing of China? But while we cannot all be missionaries, we can all do our part in supporting those who are, and in the work entrusted to Canada's as yet solitary representative in that great Empire, is afforded an inspiring outlet for inherent mission zeal. "I entreat you," he writes, "to continue your support of my struggling mission." Let us not be regardless of that appeal! Ten thousand dollars within the space of a single year should not be too high a mark to aim at.

THE WAY in which France has discharged her stewardship towards the million refugees, or more, who have found in her an asylum will be recorded to her credit in the histories of the future. She has solved the problem, it is said, in a remarkable manner. The bulk of these homeless victims are from her own invaded and devastated districts, and from stricken Belgium, but a great many of them are Serbians and Montenegrins, who, driven from their own country in poverty and destitution, have been received in France as brothers and fellow-sufferers with their own.

AS FAR as possible, we learn from authoritative sources, these refugees have, out of regard for their accustomed associations, been grouped into little colonies in which they enjoy a sort of municipal life of their own. The Army barracks, temporarily vacated for the scenes of active warfare, have been adapted to this end. In the Province of which Nancy is the capital there are 30,000 refugees, and each barracks represents a little city, providing homes now for about 5,000 War victims. The authorities with singular feeling and spirit of humanity guarded against the separation of families, and even of neighbors and residents of the same town or village. For example, a visitor will now find residents of the same village grouped on the same floor, each family being allotted one or two rooms.

THE BULK of the refugees are, as a matter of course, women and children. What men there are are old or, at least, disqualified by infirmities of one kind or another from active service. For the children, schools, well-manned and efficiently taught, have been opened, a special feature of the classes being manual training for boys over twelve. Each one is taught a practical trade, and is thus being fitted to take the place of his elders who have, it may be, fallen in the War, when peace enables him to return to his own home. Among the trades taught are the making of chairs, tables and other articles of furniture, which will be useful in the rearing of ruined homes.

THERE are classes, too, in domestic science for girls over twelve, and the earnings from the sewing classes are turned over to their families with which to provide such comforts as are beyond the scope of the government allowance. It is not obligatory for the adults to dine in common, but the children must take their meals in the municipal dining rooms where the teachers, matrons, and others in charge can have supervision over them. A common social room serves for the aged grandmothers to work and talk together, and similar provision is made for the old men. Taken altogether, the way France has handled this problem, with such delicate regard for the sensibilities of the refugees and for their future welfare is one of the most remarkable incidents of the whole War. Grappled in a death struggle with a powerful and relentless foe France has yet had time to give a mother's care to the stranger within her gates.

Let us only think of achieving the present day well; and when tomorrow shall have come it too shall be called to-day, and then we shall think of it.—St. Francis de Sales.