

The Catholic Record

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London, Saturday, Nov. 9, 1918

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A principle is a fundamental truth universal in its application. The principle in the political order for which the greater part of the civilized world has stood in the stupendous struggle now nearing successful conclusion is that which underlies every rational conception of democracy, and which is succinctly defined in the statement that governments derive all their just rights from the consent of the governed.

He voiced a feeling and conviction which we have reason to think is much more widespread in England than press despatches might lead us to believe:

"There is one question in regard to which the need for action by Liberals is immediate. I refer to Ireland, where the situation—already delicate, but after the labors of the Convention not without hope—has been entangled by gratuitous difficulties. We are witnessing the easily foreseeable results of the crude mishandling this last spring of the Irish problem of military services.

"There is nothing in the whole sphere of our Imperial and domestic policy so immediate in its urgency and so far-reaching in its consequences as that which should be able to enter the Council Chamber of Peace free from the reproach that the only part of our Empire to which we are afraid or are unable to grant self-government is that which lies close at our own shores."

There is little reason to hope that the present British Government will have the courage or the statesmanship to settle the Irish question. But the acceptance of the general principle of democracy carries with it as a logical and necessary consequence its application to Ireland and this puts beyond all doubt or question the ultimate concession to the Irish people of the rights so eloquently and unequivocally proclaimed by Mr. Wilson and accepted by the Allied nations.

Great Britain, when the voice of her people is heard, will not stand out the one unprincipled nation in a world committed to the principle of democracy.

"EQUAL AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE"

Nearly three hundred years ago an enlightened Englishman, who was at the time Attorney-General for Ireland, wrote this truth which is still true at the beginning of the twentieth century: "For there is no nation under the sun that doth love equal and impartial justice better than the Irish."

A correspondent in an Irish paper by way of comment on Sir John Davies witness to the passionate Irish love of equal and impartial justice cites two instances of the ascendancy conception of equality, impartiality and justice.

The previous week the paper had reported the fact that Michael Callahan was sentenced to three years' penal servitude on the charge of attempting to bring fire-arms and explosives into Ireland. Whereupon the correspondent remarks: "Sir Edward Carson, who, in the British House of Commons, took full responsibility for the Larnie gun-running, was made Attorney-General for England in May, 1915; First Lord of the Admiralty in December, 1916, and member of the War Cabinet, July 1917."

Another famous and cynical objection to the Irish people is furnished by this two-fold sample of equal and impartial justice under Sir John Davies' successor as Attorney-General for Ireland, Sir J. H. Campbell, the most blatant rebel and pro-German of them all in 1914:

1. Jack O'Sheehan was guilty of the unpeppable Irish crime of singing "The Felons of our Land." The punishment that was considered as fitting that crime in Ireland under present-day administration of equal and impartial justice was two year's hard labor.

"No man, no group of men, chose these to be the issues of the struggle. They are the issues of it, and they must be settled—by no arrangement or compromise or adjustment of interests, but definitely and once for all and with a full and unequivocal acceptance of the principle that the interest of the weakest is as sacred as the interests of the strongest."

Now apply the general democratic principle to Ireland. Apply to Ireland the foregoing deductions from the great fundamental principle of democracy. Mr. Wilson, the great spokesman of democracy, has laid down general principles which if applied to Ireland would settle once and forever the Irish question. To accept the principles and deny their application to Ireland is to rival Berlin in dishonesty and to incur the obloquy of all men and nations who have fought for freedom and democracy.

There is little wonder then, that Mr. Asquith, speaking in Manchester the very same day that Mr. Wilson delivered his great address in New York, should voice the keen sense of humiliating inconsistency which must oppress all honest Englishmen if their great country can not take part with clean hands in the great Conference of the world's democracies.

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2. Charles Quaid, of Croom, was convicted of murdering his housekeeper "under circumstances of great cruelty." He, however, had rendered services to the Empire in the matter of recruiting. His sentence was one year's imprisonment in the first division, (i. e. without hard labor.)

The official report to the War Office of the Irish Recruiting Committee in the first year of the War extolling alarm at the rapid and enthusiastic enlistment of Nationalists is the spirit which still animates a hostile administration and a parasitic Bohaldom in Ireland. It is the same spirit which impelled Lieut. Forester to sabre the crippled tailor at Zabern.

The question of Irish disaffection, like other questions, has two sides. The press agencies give us only one side. Despite the natural temptation men of Irish origin should not be deluded by a figure of speech. To personify "England," to blame "England" for past and present Prussianism in Ireland is to make a grievous mistake fraught with disastrous consequences. The group of politicians now speaking and acting in England's name will soon have to render an account of their stewardship to the newly-enfranchised English people. And the English people will not perpetuate Prussianism at home after overthrowing it abroad. Patient confidence in the eternal principles of right is now more necessary and better justified than at any time in history.

WILSON'S ADDRESS

President Wilson's great address of Sept. 27th, which our Canadian newspapers barely noticed, was given in full in the October 12th issue of the CATHOLIC RECORD. Since the time it was set up it has become one of the great fundamental bases for the readjustment of the world. At the time we regarded it as the most important pronouncement since the beginning of the War. The following extracts from an editorial of the current number of the Saturday Evening Post recognize and emphasize its importance:

"We wish every reader of The Saturday Evening Post would turn back now and read over the speech President Wilson delivered in New York at the beginning of the Fourth Liberty Loan drive in September. We believe it is as memorable as the Declaration of Independence and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It translates the spirit of both those historic utterances into world language.

"It would have been a thesis an amiable dream—but two million American soldiers in France and the day-by-day effort of a hundred million Americans at home give it the solid outlines of attainable reality. In what it tangibly implies no political document we are acquainted with equals it, for none other was consciously addressed to such a vast audience.

"At every vital point it stands squarely opposed to the Prussian idea. To say that the State legitimately exists only for the well being of the men and women who compose it; that justice and the interests of the peoples shall be the only international rule; that there shall be no subjugation of one racial group by another—is to challenge and deny in the flattest terms the Prussian idea that people exist for the power and glory of the State. To accept the President's idea is to renounce conquest completely and as a matter of course.

"The implications of that speech are tremendous: No domination of one group by another; no irresponsible power; everywhere the greatest practicable measure of self-government; no organized coercion except to enforce the will of a majority; justice the constant aim; and a constant effort to give every group the freest possible opportunity to develop its abilities.

"Take the speech home again. It states a cause that sanctions all the sacrifices necessary to attain it."

One of the implications of that speech is self-government for Ireland. It is a masterpiece and our readers can do nothing better than to read and re-read it.

LEARNING THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD

If we are to measure the enormity of humanity's crimes by the punishment that is being inflicted upon the race, we must conclude that never did mankind sin so grievously as in our day. War, famine and pestilence are taking their dread toll from every land and inflicting dire distress upon many of the survivors. But, notwithstanding the weight of God's avenging hand, there is still so much insincerity and dishonesty in public life, so much callousness and blindness among the ruling classes, so much vice flouting itself in public places, so much vitriolic hatred of

Christianity and above all so much forgetfulness of God's overruling Providence that no wonder people are asking themselves if we have come upon the days foretold by Our Lord Himself in that terrible last gospel of the year. But, darksome though the horizon be, God is still in His world. The punishment that He inflicts upon His erring children is not so much vindictive as medicinal; and already it has brought forth its fruits of repentance and good works. War, like a toad ugly and venomous, has brightened the precious jewel of charity in the hearts of many. Adversity has taught us new uses, united humanity within closer bonds and given a new impetus to our generous impulses. Catholics, it is consoling to note, notwithstanding the many calls upon their benevolence, are giving more liberally than ever before to our home and foreign missions.

It is a pleasing occupation to point out the bright patches in the dark cloud that envelops the world. We might dwell upon the numerous conversions to the faith, the return of so many careless Catholics to the practice of their religion and the edifying example of so many heroic nuns and chaplains; but we prefer to single out one good effect of the War which is deserving of special notice because it strikes at one of the capital vices of our age, viz., the vice of avarice. The world has loosed its purse strings. It has learned the luxury of doing good.

Religion teaches us that while men should be secure, as far as their fellows are concerned, in their earthly possessions, whether these possessions have accrued to them by inheritance or through their own efforts, yet they are but stewards in relation to God to whom belongs the earth and the fulness thereof. They are bound to use their superfluous wealth for God's glory and the welfare of their neighbor. This applies not only to very rich men but to all who possess more than is necessary to maintain themselves in their station in life and to make reasonable provision for their offspring. Notwithstanding this teaching there is a very common misapprehension, even among Catholics in regard to this matter. "If I give," say they "of my abundance to the poor in order to have God's blessing, I am performing a praiseworthy act but I am not bound by any precept to do so." Yet we are told in Holy Writ, "Help the poor because of the commandment." "I command thee to open thy hand to the poor and needy brother."

If the War did nothing else than bring home to men the instability of material possessions, and enlarge their generosity towards the afflicted it would be a real blessing. If it induced them to break the golden calves that they had been worshipping, it would have checked at least a very pernicious and widespread species of modern idolatry. This it certainly has accomplished. It is true that the profiteers are still with us and that suffering at home and abroad has not softened the flinty hearts of some opulent citizens, but popular opinion has set its seal of condemnation upon both of these. Never before has Canada given so generously, and what is true of Canada is true of other countries. Call follows call for one charity or another and the people respond gladly and with increasing alacrity. Yea, they give till it hurts and find pleasure in the pain.

It may be that patriotism has much to do with this. There is a satisfaction in knowing that one has done his bit. It may be, too, that pity gives ere charity begins. We must not look for the highest theological motive in a world that lost its sense of true proportion when it lost the gift of the true faith. The published appeals to the people seldom suggest a higher sanction for giving than mere altruism; yet we may reasonably suppose that many have in mind when making their donations the words of Christ, "Whoever you do unto the least of Mine you do unto Me." Catholics may well emulate the example of many of our separated brethren in the matter of generous giving. If they knew God as Catholics do they would certainly love Him; for they have given the best proof of that by loving their brother. God is charity, and a world that is becoming more charitable is certainly becoming nearer to God. The selfishness of the nations might well lead to a pessimistic view of the future were it not that we know that the Lord loves a cheerful giver and that charity covereth a multitude of sins.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE GEOGRAPHY of Europe will be an interesting study after the close of the War. Turkey, for one thing, will probably cease to be known west of the Bosphorus, and Constantinople, for so many centuries the capital of Moslemism, may revert to the Christian Powers of the West. Those of us whose memory goes back forty years will recall that on the maps over which we pondered as school-boys, Turkey in Europe stretched from the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora to the Adriatic, and the several Balkan States—Roumania, Serbia, Bulgaria—were non-existent. Greece had a feeble hold on the southern peninsula and the Isles of Egean, but, largely on sufferance of Turkey. The Great Powers, it is true, had to be reckoned with, but for which fact Greece too would have been crushed under the heel of the Moslem.

IN MIDDLE Europe too the changes will be vast and far-reaching. With the setting up of Hungary as an independent State, the great Dual Empire is rent in twain, and the sway of the Hapsburgs possibly ended. Serbia, which has suffered so much through-out the War, will gain in prestige, and Roumania—Austria-Hungary's other neighbor on the South—freed from Russian and German domination, should enter upon a freer and higher national life. As for Russia, apart from the recreation of Poland (which should not be a matter of speculation), it is too soon to prognosticate the changes that are almost certainly in store. Russia has always been an unknown quantity in European history, and notwithstanding present chaos, we have never wavered in the belief that she will yet yield predominant influence in the world, and, possibly is destined to be the great bulwark of Europe against the "Yellow Peril."

WHILE MATTERS are, as we write, still unsettled on the Western front, it would be idle to speculate as to the future. That Alsace-Lorraine will revert to France seems a foregone conclusion, but, will Denmark get back the stolen provinces of Schleswig-Holstein; shall Saxony and Bavaria become once more independent kingdoms, and to what extent will the Austro-Italian frontier be readjusted? These are all questions which come within the scope of President Wilson's "conditions," and while the diplomats are gathered about the Peace table, all mankind will look on with a degree of interest and expectancy without parallel in regard to the wars of the past.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

THE ISOLATION of Germany on her Eastern frontier has proceeded so far that on Wednesday all passenger and freight traffic between Germany and Austria ceased. In the mountains of Bohemia the Czechs have seized trains carrying food to Vienna and to Germany. The disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire continues with amazing rapidity. A popular Government has been formed in Vienna by leading Austro-German Socialists, who have solemnly hauled down the flag of the Hapsburgs and assumed control over the army and the civil administration. The Hungarians have possession of their Capital after a little over two years of exile. Government entirely independent of Austria. The southern Slavs are now in complete control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, together with the fleet of Austria-Hungary. It says much for German discipline that amid the chaos of the break-up of the Teutonic Empire Austrian troops of Germanic origin fight on doggedly along the Alpine front in northern Italy, while the Germans on the Meuse, in the Champagne and along the Scheldt above and below Valenciennes obstinately resist the attacks of the British, French and American armies. This resistance, however, is but the last flare-up of a dying fire. Germany must make peace almost immediately on any terms if she would avoid a bloody revolution. The War Lords stand with their backs to the wall—and the wall is giving way behind them.

THE BATTLE on the plains of Venetia has developed into a complete rout of the Austrian army. Of the number of prisoners taken by the Italians up to the present time no accurate count can be kept. They are believed to number considerably over 60,000, and already more than 700 guns captured by the Italians and the British and French have been counted. The booty taken, it is stated, is immense, its value being estimated at billions of lire.

IN THE REGION south of Valenciennes Sir Douglas Haig reports that English and Canadian troops attacked yesterday morning at dawn on a six-mile front, and after sharp fighting, during which exceptional heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, forced a passage of the Rhonelle Brook, captured the villages of Aulny and Preseau, occupied the high land on the southern edge of Valenciennes to the point where the flooding of the Scheldt Valley begins, and practically isolated the city. Between two and three thousand prisoners were taken during the battle. The drive was engineered by the Canadians, and the advancing infantry had the support of one of the heaviest artillery bombardments of the War, which made the going easy. Valenciennes is now almost bottled up; only a narrow tract of un-flooded land is available for the retreat of the Germans still in the city.

THE ATTACK along the Scheldt on Thursday and Friday by British, American, French and Belgian troops was most successful. It is announced that on a front of almost twelve miles the German positions were penetrated to a depth of between three and four miles.

THE AMERICAN forces operating on the west bank of the Meuse have occupied the town of Brioules, on the west bank of the Meuse, after a severe engagement, and have followed this up by a general attack along the whole front between the Meuse and the Forest of Argonne. In all, during the day's operations a dozen villages were taken, most of

which had been fortified by the Germans, and more than three thousand prisoners had been captured. The advance is the most important made in a single day's fighting since the first rush of the Americans north of Verdun a little over a month ago.

GENERAL GOUBAUD's army attacked along the Aisne west of the Forest of the Argonne, driving easterly, so that he might link up his front with that of the Americans east and north-east of Grand Pre.

LORD ROBERT CEIL, speaking on behalf of the Foreign Office, stated last night that the armistice accepted by Turkey means a complete and unconditional surrender. Mr. George Barnes, member of the British War Cabinet, states that British warships have been assembled at the mouth of the Dardanelles for some time, and that on Thursday evening the vessels had already started through the Straits. The forcing of the Bosphorus Channel into the Black Sea may take some little time, as it was very heavily mined to prevent the Russian fleet from attacking Constantinople. It is believed, however, that the Turks will be able to show the Allied mine sweepers where the obstructions are, and thus enable them quickly to clear the channel. Mr. Barnes suggests that the first step toward an attack on Germany from the eastern frontier will be the occupation of the Danube waterway.

THE RED CROSS IN IRELAND

A GREAT CONTRIBUTION FROM MUNSTER, LEINSTER AND CONNAUGHT

The Times (London, Eng.) Oct. 11, 1918. In estimating Ireland's voluntary civilian effort, by gift and by service—and by Ireland here we mean only Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, Ulster elects to act independently—account must be taken of the population and wealth. There are in the three Provinces only 1,838,700 persons between the ages of fifteen and sixty, or less than half the total of the whole population of the island. The population of Great Britain exceeds 41,000,000. The ratio between the population, therefore, of the three southern Provinces and Great Britain is as one to 15. If the figures used by the Inland Revenue Commissioners are to be the guide, the relative potentiality of Ireland and Great Britain in civilian war effort, is, in respect of personal service, in the ratio of one to 15 and in respect of wealth of one to 25.

If account were taken of income, the disparity would be much more marked, and the ratio, at the lowest estimate, would be one to 30. Few persons enjoy large incomes from commerce alone in Ireland. The result clearly demonstrates that Ireland's contribution to the War is astonishingly great. For instance, the total sum contributed by England and Wales on "Our Day" last year amounted to £341,631. The wealth of England and Wales is, as shown, at least 25 times that of Ireland. Hence Ireland's proportionate offering would have been £13,665. It actually amounted to £22,600.

It is impossible to state with complete accuracy the amount contributed by Irish civilians since the outbreak of the War towards Red Cross and other war funds. A substantial but unascertainable sum has been, and continues to be, sent direct from contributors to funds and societies having their headquarters outside Ireland. For example, substantial contributions flow regularly to the Prisoners of War Regimental Committee of the Irish Women's Association, whose headquarters is at Kensington Palace, Messrs. A. Guinness, Son, and Co. subscribe several thousand pounds annually direct to the British Red Cross. A reasonable proportion of the Prince of Wales' Fund was subscribed from Ireland. An Irish Hospital attached to the French Red Cross was, for a time, maintained by Irish contributions at the Western Front. The Irish district of the St. John Ambulance Brigade endowed some beds in the hospital at Etaples. Altogether there is no doubt that the total sum contributed by the three Provinces in money and in kind is not less than half a million, a sum which would correspond with a contribution by Great Britain of about fourteen millions.

Contributions from Ireland represent all social grades of the people and all religious denominations. Catholic and Protestant, Nationalist and Unionist, rich and poor, have shown in the most practical manner their loyalty to the Red Cross and to other war funds. When the Red Cross Bazaar paraded the streets of Dublin the political leaders of every school expressed by word and by action their respect for the Geneva Convention. The Irish medical and nursing professions have shown outstanding loyalty and self-sacrifice. Eminent physicians and surgeons have surrendered valuable practices for work at home and at the front; the trained hospital nurses from Irish hospitals have not been behindhand.

HOSPITALS AND AMBULANCES

We may now come to details. The British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John have recruited between 500 and 600 men for the R. A. M. C. through the Military

regard, contrasting him with Bossuet, it is related by a contemporary that when people heard Bossuet they exclaimed, "What a splendid sermon," but that when they heard Fenelon they said, "May God give us grace to sin no more." So far do men differ in their estimate of a preacher's power! Possibly in the case of the Statesman writer, the difference is subjective. Certain it is that even through the halting medium of translation, Fenelon still has power over the hearts even more than the intellects of men.

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