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LONDON, SATURDAY, FEB. 5, 1921

THE ROOT OF THE IRISH QUESTION

This is an age which boasts of its education; nor is it less boastful of its right of free inquiry, of unfettered and untrammelled investigation of the truth though the heavens should fall. An age, too, which boasts and boasts loudly of its democracy.

As a matter of reality there never was an age when the herd instinct was so pronounced, when really independent thinking (one indisputable and essential object of education) was so rare, or when the few, intellectually, economically and politically, so easily and effectually dominated the befuddled and unthinking multitude.

Yet, on the other hand, we have education, such as it is, widely diffused; we have a saving remnant who think for themselves; and we have at least the forms of democracy. And as people begin to think for themselves we have a breaking away from current traditions and a weighing in the balance of current esth-phrases.

One might think such development would be welcomed. But no; far from it. The loudest in their lip-service to education, free inquiry, and democracy are the first to take alarm and condemn every exercise of boasted rights as crude, subversive of liberty and above all undemocratic!

For ourselves we are quite convinced, no matter how far wrong the innovators may go, that their self-assertion is a more healthy symptom than bovine acquiescence in the shame belated of selfishly-interested leaders of the herd.

A good illustration of the educational influence of a "free press" in an age of general reading is furnished by a news item from Germany. A former director of a certain steel corporation bluntly accused the German steel trust of having sold to France during two years of the war two million tons of steel which the French manufactured into guns and shells that were used against the Germans. And further, that less was charged for this steel which reached France through Switzerland than was charged the German Government which paid billions of marks annually into the coffers of the steel trust.

It is important to bear in mind that Hugo Stinnes, the richest man in Germany, was head of the steel trust all this time.

The despatch which informed us of this colossal scandal also told us that one hundred German newspapers controlled by Hugo Stinnes promptly and emphatically denied the truth of the charge!

Now in the matter of a "free press" in what does the English-speaking world differ from Germany?

It is true that distrust in, even contempt for the press is general. But who can escape the general impression, made by the carefully edited "news" he reads day after day?

In England there is an influential portion of the press as yet uncontrolled by the British Hugo Stinnes, some newspapers which really cherish the ideals that others pharisaically prelate about; and this significant fact should receive due recognition. Keenly alive to the humiliation, and world-wide discredit that Turkish methods of government in Ireland bring to the British prestige they have sufficient patriotism and honesty to denounce as roundly as any Irishman the infamies perpetrated in Ireland in the name of the British people. And at long last they are succeeding in awakening the

British people to the ruthlessness and ferocity which had already horrified a world grown used to horrors.

Irishmen at home and abroad may well be excused for scoffing at the alleged ignorance of the English people of what is done in their name in Ireland; but English ignorance of Irish conditions is an undeniable if almost incredible fact. In last week's issue of the RECORD we published, with permission of the N. Y. Times, Mrs. Alice Stopford Green's pen-picture of present Irish conditions. Again we have the familiar witness to English ignorance or misinformation on things Irish. But when we reflect that it is only through the press that the vast majority of people get their information English ignorance of Irish affairs becomes intelligible. Sir Horace Plunkett has recently said: "The principal obstacle in the way of a solution of the Irish question is the attitude of the Irish press." Yet the English press, in this respect, is infinitely better than the press of Canada. Here, our papers seem to think that on the policy dictated by a discredited government depend the whole law and the prophets.

However even here the truth is making its way.

Why should Ireland be united with Great Britain? That is a question which some are beginning to ask insistently. What is the Union? How was it effected? What binding force has it on the people of Ireland so that "Separatist" becomes a term of obloquy and treason, while "Unionist" is the passport of enlightenment, respectability and loyalty?

As well ask the cows or the sheep why they follow the herd instinct as to ask the average individual in this age of education and free inquiry why he takes for granted the generally accepted view of anything and everything. Still there is, as we have said before, a saving remnant. There are those who want to know the "why" of many generally accepted opinions. And our most eloquent advocates of education, free inquiry and independence thought see in this the evidence of pernicious unenlightenment and dangerous unrest.

Let that pass. What of the Union? Why is it sacrosanct? From what sacred source does this holy Union spring that it is henceforth sacrosanct and inviolable?

That is elementary history, but it is history of which 99% of the Canadians, who are cock-sure in their opinions on the Irish question, are profoundly ignorant. It is without this elementary knowledge of the history of the question that minds are made up and obstinate opinions formed in this age of boasted education.

It will not be out of place therefore to quote from no friendly source, but from an English historian with all the English prejudices in its favor, the history of the Union.

Professor J. R. Green, in his "History of the English People," writes:

"But it was at this moment, when England stood once more alone, that Pitt won the greatest of his political triumphs in the union of England with Ireland. The history of Ireland, from its conquest by William the Third up to this time, is one which no Englishman can recall without shame. Since the surrender of Limerick every Catholic Irishman, and there were five Catholics to every Protestant, had been treated as a stranger and a foreigner in his own country. The House of Lords, the House of Commons, the right of voting for representatives in Parliament, the magistracy, all corporate offices in towns, all ranks in the army, the bench, the bar, the whole administration of government or justice, were closed against Catholics. Few Catholic landowners had been left by the sweeping confiscations which had followed the successive revolts of the island, and oppressive laws forced even these few, with scant exceptions, to profess Protestantism. Necessity, indeed, had brought about a practical toleration of their religion and their worship; but in all social and political matters the native Catholics, in other words the immense majority of the people of Ireland, were simply hewers of wood and drawers of water to their Protestant masters. . . . But small as was this Protestant body, one half of it fared little better, as far as power was concerned, than the Catholics; for the Presbyterians, who formed the bulk of the Ulster settlers, were shut out by law

from all civil, military, and municipal offices. The administration and justice of the country were thus kept rigidly in the hands of members of the Established Church, a body which comprised about a twelfth of the population of the island; while the government was practically monopolized by a few great Protestant landowners. The rotten boroughs, which had originally been created to make the Irish Parliament dependent on the Crown, had by this time fallen under the influence of the adjacent landlords, whose command of these made them masters of the House of Commons, while they formed in person the House Peers. . . .

"Irish politics were for these men a mere means of public plunder; they were glutted with pensions, preferments, and bribes in hard cash in return for their services; they were the advisers of every lord-lieutenant, and the practical governors of the country. The result was what might have been expected; and for more than a century Ireland was the worst-governed country in Europe. . . .

"The English Parliament, too, claimed the right of binding Ireland as well as England by its enactments, and one of its statutes transferred the appellate jurisdiction of the Irish Peerage to the English House of Lords. Calling as these restrictions were to the plundering aristocracy of Ireland, they formed a useful check on its tyranny. But as if to compensate for the benefits of this protection, England did her best to annihilate Irish commerce and to ruin Irish agriculture. Statutes passed by the jealousy of English landowners forbade the export of Irish cattle or sheep to English ports. The export of wool was forbidden, lest it might interfere with the profits of English wool-growers. Poverty was thus added to the curse of misgovernment, and poverty deepened with the rapid growth of the native population, till famine turned the country into a hell."

This is Green's description of the state of Ireland just before the Union. The picture is a dark one because the English historian would have us believe that the Union was a blessing. A more passing reference to the volunteers, to Catholic co-operation, to Grattan and Flood, and to "Irish independence" (with the sinister inverted commas), and then he goes on:

"So real was the danger that England was forced to give way; and Lord Rockingham induced the British Parliament to abandon, in 1782, the judicial and legislative supremacy it had till then asserted over Ireland."

In reality, though in Ireland as in England there were rotten boroughs and the ascendancy of a Protestant ruling class, the Irish Parliament was not without its proportion of patriotic Irishmen, and the exact words of the Act of Parliament which Professor Green passes over so lightly were these:

"Be it enacted that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by the laws enacted by His Majesty and the Parliament of that Kingdom in all cases whatsoever, and to have all actions and suits of law and in equity, which may be instituted in that Kingdom, decided in His Majesty's Courts therein finally and without appeal thence, shall be, and is hereby declared to be, established and ascertained forever, and at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable."

That is as solemn an engagement as the treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium.

"Ireland never was and never can be a Dominion. Ireland is a Kingdom. I am not a Republican but I stand for the complete independence of Ireland," is the pronouncement of Colonel Westropp, Aide-de-camp to King George. A startling statement to those who have blindly believed in the sacredness and inviolability of the Union; but strictly in accord with history. George V. is King of Great Britain and Ireland. The Kingdom of Ireland had its own Parliament for centuries. The full independence of that Parliament was solemnly and irrevocably recognized in 1782.

After the danger to England had passed, the solemn engagement became a scrap of paper. Pitt set about fomenting rebellion in Ireland in order to bring about the Union. This Professor Green admits in these words:

"At last the smouldering discontent and dissension burst into flame. Ireland was in fact driven into rebellion by the lawless cruelty of the Orange yeomanry and the English

troops. In 1796 and 1797 soldiers and yeomanry marched over the country torturing and scourging the 'croppies,' as the Irish insurgents were called in derision from their short-cut hair, robbing, ravishing, and murdering. Their outrages were sanctioned by a Bill of Indemnity passed by the Irish Parliament, and protected for the future by an Insurance Act and a suspension of the Habeas Corpus."

History repeats itself, the same "lawless cruelty," the same "torturing and scourging," the same "robbing, ravishing and murdering" are now the familiar, everyday means employed to preserve the blessings of the Union.

Well the present generation of Irishmen have learned one lesson from history. They will not be goaded into open rebellion with the odds hopelessly against them.

The rebellion of 1798 was provoked and quenched in blood.

"Lord Cornwallis," writes Green, "a wise and humane ruler, found more difficulty in checking the reprisals of his troops and of the Orangemen than in stamping out the last embers of insurrection; but the hideous cruelty brought about one good result. Pitt's disgust at the bigoted fury of Irish Protestants ended in a firm resolve to put an end to the farce of 'Independence' which left Ireland helpless in their hands."

So the virtuous Pitt found a virtuous excuse for the Union.

Hear Professor Green as to the means by which this great act of virtue and generosity was brought about:

"The opposition of the Irish borough-mongers was naturally stubborn and determined. But with them it was a sheer question of gold; and the assent of the Irish Parliament was bought with a million in money, and with a liberal distribution of pensions and peerages to its members. Base and shameless as such means were, Pitt may fairly plead that they were the only means by which the bill for the Union could have been passed. As the matter was finally arranged in June, 1800, one hundred Irish members became part of the House of Commons at Westminster, and twenty-eight temporal with four spiritual peers, chosen for each Parliament by their fellows, took their seats in the House of Lords."

"Base and shameless as were the means" the end justified them! And that is the base and shameful origin of the sacrosanct and inviolable Union.

Bear in mind Green's purpose was to justify the Union; his admission of a contemptuous opponent of Irish independence. His only reference to the Renunciation Act of 1782 is contained in the one sentence quoted above. Base and shameless as was the violation of that solemn guarantee of Irish legislative independence eighteen years after it was made, Professor Green has not a word of apology or justification to offer.

But base and shameless bribery aside, could a Parliament representing a small fraction of the Irish people alienate forever the inalienable right of the Irish people to govern themselves? Will the blatant champions of democracy answer?

THE REASON WHY

An insignificant proportion of the hundred and ten millions of Americans glories in the doubly hyphenated appellation of Anglo-Saxon Americans. Yet this dwindling element makes a good deal of noise. It snarls at the presence of Donal O'Callaghan, Lord Mayor of Cork, in the land of the free without a British passport. Well, the average decent and self-respecting American is under no illusions as to the reason why. And the Anglo-Saxon shyllocks have the American decision though not precisely what they clamored for. Lord Mayor O'Callaghan will go back as a seaman when he has finished his mission in the States; and not before.

Why a distinguished Irishman had to resort to the means O'Callaghan used to reach America is well understood.

Some light is thrown on the situation by the Labor Department's Report which is published in full with its appendices by the Nation. Here is one document therein given to the public:

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34142

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY OFFICE, DUBLIN CASTLE

CRIME DEPARTMENT—SPECIAL BRANCH
(The officer to whom this file is

addressed is responsible for its safe custody)
Subject: . . . Information . . .
Date: Nov. 16, 1920.

C. I. Nenagh:

A man named Baker, who is employed in the Dublin Tramways, has just returned from Thurles, and has furnished Griffiths with sworn statements of outrages committed by Black and Tans in Tipperary.

He has relations in Thurles, and it is suggested that they should be "looked up." This should be done as discreetly as possible. Perhaps the Police know something of these people, and should act according to their best judgment, and report result of search if such be made.

L. CHRESMAN.

C. I. for D. I. G.

Not a hint, it will be observed, that the information furnished was untrue or exaggerated, but a very broad intimation that people furnishing information of the activities of the Black and Tans should be "discreetly" "looked up."

The Labor Commission adds this comment:

"The original of this document is no longer in the hands of the authorities. The Commission saw the actual document and a photograph was taken of it. The term 'look up' is apparently an accepted phrase which may cover a multitude of sins. The instructions in the document are couched in vague language, but the Commission is of the opinion that the recipient of the instructions would read between the lines."

And the Commission as well as others would probably have some misgivings as to the certainty of British passports issued to Baker and his relations in Thurles if they wished to come to America to testify as to conditions in Ireland.

From another document in the Appendix of the English Labor Commission's Report headed "Brutal Treatment and Theft" we take this paragraph:

"He took a revolver out of his pocket and placed it to my right temple, and asked me to tell him where Donal O'Callaghan, the deputy, sleeps at night. I said I did not know. He called me a liar, and stated I did know, and that I knew everything going on at the City Hall. He then opened the button of my shirt and placed the muzzle of the revolver against my heart, telling me he was giving me five minutes to divulge the information."

Perhaps they were trying to find O'Callaghan in order to urge him to take a passport to America.

Father Griffin, of Galway, had accepted an invitation to come to America to testify before the Commission now inquiring into Irish conditions. He got a passport to Heaven. Brutally murdered his body was found buried in a bog.

The office of Lord Mayor of Cork is not a position that a coward would seek. Lord Mayor MacCurtain was murdered by the police; Lord Mayor MacSwiney was hounded for two years; finally arrested and imprisoned, he laid down his life as a protest against tyranny. Lord Mayor O'Callaghan has long been "on the run."

What that means is told by the London Daily News, one of the English newspapers that is saving England's good name and serving England's cause, while the lick-spittle press is besmirching the one and damaging the other by condoning the policy indignantly denounced when practiced by Turkey. The Daily News says:

"In one important town all but five of the town councillors are 'on the run.' Now what does this expression mean? It means that men who are interested in politics, some of them Irish Volunteers, and in that some belligerents, but many of them Sinn Féiners or trade unionists who have no connection with the Republican Army, live in a perpetual expectation of capture. They do not sleep in their own beds; they move from place to place; they are always on their guard against surprise. Sir Hamar Greenwood uses the phrase, amid the answering cheers of the House of Commons, to describe the steady progress he is making in reducing Ireland to order. The innocent might suppose that these men are in danger of arrest and trial before a court of law. No such thing. They are in danger of murder. When at last they are surprised in bed, they are carried off, not for trial, but to the nearest backyard or the nearest river, to be shot or drowned. 'Attempting to escape,' is now becoming one of the commonest forms of death in Ireland."

Yes that's what it means to be "on the run" in Ireland today.

And Lord Mayor O'Callaghan was "on the run."

Even for an Anglo-Saxon-American is any further reason necessary to explain why he came to America as a stowaway. And is there not sufficient reason why the United

States Government should decide that he is a "seaman" and may re-ship when he is good and ready.

"Do a great right, do a little wrong and curb this cruel devil of his will."

There is no fear of Donal O'Callaghan's being deported with unseemly haste. The Anglo-Saxon Americans may fume and fume a bit; but they should read the U. S. Census returns and ponder them in their hearts.

A medical friend informs us that, within the last few years, a very distinguished representative of England might have been excluded from the United States under the existing immigration laws. The disease which would have excluded him is probably hereditary and not the personal fault of the unfortunate victim.

If Irish Americans had been capable of the savagery of Anglo-Saxon Americans the matter would have been aired on the floor of Congress.

But, thank God, the Irish Americans in this case scorned to do what Anglo-Saxons have now tried—and failed—to do to Donal O'Callaghan.

FAIR PLAY IN TAXATION

BY THE OBSERVER

Few subjects have been more discussed than taxation. The subject is the happy hunting ground of cranks of every variety; amongst whom the Single Taxer holds a very prominent place.

Like most of our laws, our taxation acts are neither wholly good, nor yet so bad as some represent them to be. One thing may be said against them, under present-day conditions; and that is, that they do not reach adequately to the purse of the man who is best able to pay.

A present instance, and a very striking one, of this inadequacy is the Federal Income Tax. Up to the present moment, the collections under this Act have been positively farcical. The man who has an income of \$2,000 or upwards, from one or two sources, and who comes under the Act, cannot, without great risk, make a false return. That risk, however, is taken in a great many cases; and the fraud is never investigated or questioned. But the really wealthy people of Canada who have immense incomes from many sources have not yet begun to pay anything like their share; and they are not being subjected to any bother at all either.

Nothing could well be more absurd than the income tax returns up to this time. I shall, on another occasion, offer an analysis of the Government report on this subject. The great weakness in the administration of the Act up to this time is, that it has not been attempted to follow up and verify the returns made by individuals who are notoriously wealthy. A case has been brought to my notice in which an Inspector of Taxation, after writing to the employer of a man who had sent him a return, added \$2 to the salary returned; and the \$2 was a mistake at that. The same inspector has had scores of false returns sent to him by wealthy men, which he has never verified at all. Possibly he has not the means of doing so.

The great weakness of our systems of taxation in Canada is, that they bear disproportionately on the man who has little; largely because that little is easily seen and can be valued at a glance. His little home, his few bits of furniture, the ledger of his employer: These present no difficulty to the assessor. The poor man pays to the last cent.

How is it with the rich man? How is the assessing of large stocks-in-trade, for instance, done in the average Canadian town or city? The assessor goes in; if he goes that far; some of them do not go in; to the shop or office; and they ask: "How much stock have you?" And what does the merchant tell them? The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? A few, perhaps, do. But most men are as little sensitive in conscience about taxes as they are about smuggling in a box of cigars in their valise when coming across the line.

Mercantile assessing is done wholly haphazard in most places in Canada. So is all assessing when the subject-matter to be valued presents any difficulty or complication.

Poll taxes are usually collected; because a man cannot conveniently hide his poll; but many things are hidden and are never dreamed of in the philosophy of the careless or inexperienced assessor.

Now, there is in Canada a vast amount of what may be called "war wealth." I do not mean to say that

war-made wealth is, on principle, more properly taxable, than any other wealth. Perhaps so; some people say so; and there is some color, sentimentally at least, for their view; but I do not assert it. The fact that some men made great wealth during the War, when others gave blood and life without gain, does make one the more angry at seeing such wealth escape taxation; but, on principle, those who are best able to pay ought to pay most; and those who are least able, ought to pay least, and there is some ground for saying that some who now pay what is to them a considerable amount, ought to be exempt altogether.

No man need tell me that the wealth cannot be ascertained. It can be ascertained. The Government of the United States ascertains it; not perfectly, of course; but very well. Canadians would have little to complain of if the income tax were as well collected in Canada.

But, by present indications, the war debt of Canada is to be paid by those who are least able to pay; not by those who are best able.

In other words, that same class of our population who suffered most by the War, and who at the same time contributed by billions to the piling up of huge fortunes for the few, are now kindly invited to pay off the crushing debt which the War imposed on the country.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

It is an old saying of economists that in all ages the agrarian problem has been the fruitful mother of revolution. Those who recall the struggles of the Irish people of a generation ago will not need to be reminded how largely the system of land tenure then, and for centuries preceding, in vogue, entered into them. Ireland's troubles of today are of another kind, but the heritage of cruel memories of injustice in the past in regard to the land certainly tends to aggravate the situation of the present.

IN MORE than one respect the history of Ireland is reproduced in that of Mexico. It is customary for the shallow and uninformed to refer to Mexico as the natural home of turbulence, and incapacity for self-government, and to attribute all this to racial deficiencies. How very far this is from the truth will be apparent to anyone who will take the trouble to inform himself as to the facts and will bring an open mind to the task. Than the real Mexican there is no more cultivated, more refined or more orderly individual in any land, as residents among them and observant visitors have testified. But Mexico is a land of inequalities and inherited constitutional injustices, and between the opposing forces born of this state of affairs the forces of peace and of good government have been the victims, and Mexico's good name as a nation has been beclouded.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL troubles which lie at the bottom of Mexican unrest have of late attracted much attention among students of political economy at home and abroad. As a result much sadder ideas are gradually coming to prevail in regard to the real character of the Mexican people. A member of the present Government, in a recent interview with the Canadian Trade Commissioner, gave it as his conviction that with the solution of the agrarian problem most of Mexico's troubles would vanish. But, so deep-rooted and far-reaching is this problem in Mexico that he was doubtful if it could be solved inside of a generation.

THE SITUATION, in short, is that, as in Ireland before the days of the great Land Act, Mexico has long lain under the curse of absentee landlordism. The land has been held by large proprietors, usually residing abroad, who own haciendas, amounting in some cases to over a hundred thousand acres. These great proprietors, or haciendados give out parcels of land to be worked by the peon, or laborer, who is supplied with oxen, machinery, tools, seed, etc., by his master, and in return the haciendado receives a large percentage of all crops harvested. The peon is credited with a share of these crops, which he usually receives in the form of credit at a store owned by his employer. The result is that the peon is kept a perpetual debtor to the estate, as he cannot leave until his indebtedness is liquidated, except, it should be added, in the