

The Catholic Record

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HOME RULE AND THE BRITISH JUNKERS

The half-hearted and insincere attempts of some of our Canadian papers to justify Lloyd George's surrender to the English junkers in the matter of keeping faith with Ireland makes the Globe, whose editorial pronouncement we quoted largely last week, stand out in refreshing contrast.

But some of our correspondents are mistaken in thinking that the Globe is alone in consistent and fearless advocacy and logical application of the principles which all Canadian papers loudly profess.

Referring to a local contemporary's un-Canadian palliation of the English Prime Minister's weakness or treachery by suggesting that Redmond's unwilling hand was forced by the Sinn Fein and expressing the pious belief that all would be right after the War, the Citizen says:

"All this, of course, is an attempt to uphold the action of the government without offending the large and influential section of public opinion which is convinced that the British government displayed bad faith in its repudiation of its former attitude toward the Home Rule question."

"The plain truth is that there will be no Home Rule bill passed or placed on the statute books in Britain while such men as Sir Edward Carson, Andrew Bonar Law and others, including Lord Northcliffe and his friends, are in a position to prevent it."

following constitutional practice that led to the famous trial which ended so dramatically in the death of Richard Piggot, the unfortunate forger and perjurer, who was chosen by the junkers in Britain to connect Mr. Parnell with the Phoenix Park murders.

"When our contemporary says that what happens in the party political game does not necessarily represent the trend of public opinion' it exposes the whole of what goes before. It admits that what is happening to Mr. Redmond now is part of the party game. Yet it assures its readers in the same breath that now is not the time 'to stir up the smouldering fires of the Home Rule controversy' and that 'after the War the matter can be settled satisfactorily'."

We have quoted at length for several reasons. One is that the memories associated with St. Patrick's Day, 1917, will be bitter enough to make Irish men and women of Canada cherish the memory of fearless friends in a trying time.

Another good and sufficient reason is that in answering the allegations of its local contemporary the Citizen has refuted in its entirety what passes for argument on this question in that section of the Canadian press which considers special pleading, cynical inconsistency and shifty opportunism an evidence of loyalty to the Empire.

BISHOP FALLON'S ADDRESS. St. Patrick's eve, 1917, will be a memorable date for Irish Canadians. The day dear to all in whose veins runs the red blood of the fighting race is this year overclouded by a brother Celt's weakness or treachery. But the indignation and resentment of the Irish in Canada found eloquent voice in Bishop Fallon's ringing denunciation of the two weights and two measures of England's Prime Minister, the radical tool of the privileged class.

Always a convincing speaker, because he gives expression to his own deliberate and strongly-felt convictions, on this occasion one and all could feel that the Right Reverend orator was stirred to the very depths of his soul. Withal there was a dignity and restraint in his most impassioned utterances. His favorite quotation from Sir Horace Plunkett: "Anglo-Irish history is for Englishmen to remember, for Irishmen to forget," had in it an unusual touch of pathos.

To be able to forget we have to remember that the British oligarchy no more represents the British people than the Russian autocracy represented the people of Russia.

ing and consistent believer in self-government. In the Nineteenth Century for June last Mr. Sheridan, also an advocate of Imperial consolidation, and before, of course, the latest provocation, thus speaks of Ireland and its relation to the realization of that ideal:

"The prevalent belief in Ireland—namely, that the opponents of Home Rule mean the suspension of the Act to be its death if any chance gives them the power to compass that end—has spread from Ireland to the Dominions, and it is there felt that England has yet to be converted to devolution. So the position remains that the Irish question blocks the way to Imperial Federation, and unless that question be wisely and permanently settled it will continue to block the way until at last, by causing ever-widening embarrassments, it will force itself into cognizance as an Imperial question. Well, if ever the Dominions have to participate in deciding whether it is right and proper that the Irish have self-government if they want it, the history and experience of the Dominions will lead them to a speedy and certain affirmative, but their estimate of the Mother Country's capacity for leading in Imperial Federation will be sensibly damaged if they were given reason to believe that the Mother Country was in any degree herself responsible for the long-continuing failure to settle the Irish question."

The "narrow and limited class" which would "wreck the Empire rather than relinquish their ascendancy in Ireland" may yet find themselves faced with the stern necessity of making their choice of the alternatives. In any case the men of Irish blood in Canada will thank the Bishop of London for giving adequate expression in this dark and difficult hour to their outraged sense of justice, to their resentment of the insult put upon their race, and to their scorn of the pseudo-democrats whose professions are belied by their practice.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. To readers of THE CATHOLIC RECORD the Russian revolution did not come with startling unexpectedness. Four months ago we reproduced and commented upon a remarkably—and as the event proved—prophetic article written by a Russian just prior to the fall of Premier Stürmer, in which he depicted Russian conditions, the predisposing causes of inevitable revolution, conditions which are only just now coming to light in the daily press.

It began to look, however, as if Russian patriotism had decided that the dangerous and difficult day of reckoning should be postponed until after the War was concluded. Apparently conditions became intolerable. Gaunt famine stalked through a country in which there were stored not only the wheat sufficient for the home population, but the accumulations of three harvests from which in normal times Russia annually exports hundreds of millions of bushels.

Like all irresponsible oligarchies the Russian autocracy and bureaucracy miscalculated the effect of their callous indifference to the sufferings of the people. Instead of driving them to clamor for peace the malignantly selfish policy of their oppressors created just that universal and poignant sense of injustice, anger and resentment which made the stupendous revolution possible and easy.

Catholics above all others save, perhaps, the Jews, have reason to rejoice and to thank God for the overthrow of the most unscrupulous and most insidious religious tyranny of modern times.

FACING DEATH

When one reads in the daily press of sailors lining up on deck and giving three cheers as their ship sinks beneath the waves, or of a dying soldier asking his companions to raise him up that he might fire one more shot at the enemy, one's feeling of admiration is apt to be mingled with the consciousness that, after all, there is something inharmonious in this mode of passing into eternity, something, as the French would say, too bizarre to be associated with such an awful moment.

There are, first of all, those—let us hope their name is legion—who join the forces from a sense of duty not only to their country but to God. They have weighed the matter well in the balance of faith and reason. They are well aware of the sacrifice that their action entails not only for themselves but for those who are dear to them. They are not acting upon impulse. They have counted the cost and, naught dismayed, like good Christian soldiers they put their souls' affairs in order and offer themselves on the altar of patriotism.

There are others whose patriotism is, perhaps, more intense in degree but less exalted in kind. Not having any definite religious belief, the supernatural does not influence their lives. Patriotism, for them, takes the place of religion, and as they devote to it the highest faculties of their souls it is not surprising that it calls forth those transports of enthusiasm that are associated with modern flag-worship.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

REGINALD DE KOVEN and Percy MacKaye, names well known in the operatic world, have produced a new grand opera entitled "The Canterbury Pilgrims," founded on Chaucer's celebrated poem, The Canterbury Tales.

Chaucer's poem, however pleasurable to the intellect of imagination of the reader, and however faithful as a picture of the times in which he lived, is not a fit subject for the twentieth century stage. It deals with and was written in an age when religion dominated everything in life, and it was as natural for men and women to mix their prayers and their innocent fun as it was to eat or sleep.

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IN THE AIR

An air raid on England, covering the southeastern counties, is reported from London. According to the official midnight despatch the raid was still in progress. Bombs were dropped at several places in Kent. It is some time since the enemy's airships visited the English coast. The anti-aircraft defences are now capable of dealing effectively with the raiders should the weather prove favorable.—Globe, March 17.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

Some of the rosy conclusions with regard to the present operations on the west front hardly are justified by the actual facts, as there still are many trenches to pass. Much loose talk has been heard lately in regard to aerial supremacy. Such supremacy can only be gained by actual battle. We won by such means during the Somme campaign, but the test this year has yet to come.

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ON THE BATTLE LINE

If Grand Duke Nicholas resumes supreme command of the Russian armies, as seems inevitable, we may look for that crushing sledge-hammer blow of which Russia with her overwhelming numbers and regenerated spirit is capable. But not too soon.

Time is necessary to bring order and organization into the chaos, military and civil, which was deliberately brought about by the old Government. Will Germany wait or is she ready to strike while Russia is disorganized, weak and poorly equipped?

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