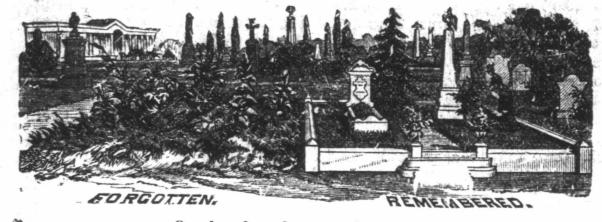
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### The Ulster Nationalists and the Home Rule Crisis

A Powerful Letter from Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P.

Every Lover of Ireland Must Look With Feelings of Despair to a Future in Which no Ray of Light Illumines the Clouded Horizon-Asks Are we to Throw Away the Golden Opportunity of Seeing a Free and United the appalling cost and the abnormal Ireland

In a letter to the Dublin Independists, Mr. Joseph Devlin, M. P., sets incomprehensible. forth the reasons for adopting the Lloyd George proposals:

Parliament, be a mighty influence ever ed was Ireland's cause?

with the rest of their co-religionists recent years.

throughout the country. Reunion would be effected under conditions Mr. Vesey Knox has pointed out

have largely solved itself? Settlement or Chaos

counties be if Lloyd George's pro- that we are asked today so recklessly posals are adopted? In exactly the to fling aside.

horizon. That we should discard a By a happy chance, the speech of the READ THE MAIL & ADVOCATE tunities."

great opportunity for national ap- Prime Minister at Ladybank has peasement and enfranchisement and come just at the appropriate moment ent complaining of an unfair report walk blindly along the road plainly to nail this deliberate lie; but it of a meeting of the Belfast National- leading to defeat and disaster, seems by lies like that the mind of Ireland

It would, no doubt, be the ideal land a Nation who would not view into condemnation of supposed schsolution if Mr. Asquith could put the with abhorrance any proposal aimed emes which have no more relation to Home Rule Act in immediate opera- at the partation of Ulster or any part Mr. Lloyd George's proposals for imtion in its entirety. But then, there of Ulster from the rest of the Father- mediate Home Rule than Tenterden are certain facts which must be land. The thing is unthinkable, No Steeple to the Goodwin Sands. "What faced, and which cannot be effaced one experiences the feeling of revul- is desired now," said Mr. Asquith, "is by merely shutting our eyes to them, sion against any exclusion policy a provisional settlement. When the Ulster Unionists may be conciliated. more keenly than I do; and it is be- war comes to an end, when the reign Who says they should be coerced? cause I have come to a clear conclu- of peace is re-established, we shall Does anyone light-heartedly propose sion that the only way to secure reas have to take stock as an Empire of to provoke another rebellion in the and lasting unity is on the basis of our internal relations as an Empire. North, and if such were provoked, the proposals before us that I appeal The fabric of Empire will have to be what hope would there be for many to my fellow-countrymen, particularly refashioned, and the relations not a long year of wiping out the fatal of my own province, to give a careful only between Great Britain and Irelegacy it would leave behind? All consideration to these proposals and land, but between the United King-Ulster, therefore, cannot be com- to realize the immensity of the issues dom and our dominions, will of necesagainst its will to come in any rash or hasty action. sity be brought, and brought promptly

Is there no middle course, leading whose excesses have shocked and this conference with Home Rule in by gentle suasion, and the powerful estranged public opinon throughout operation for twenty-six counties with influence, of allied interests. that the world. Many of the leaders of the consent of the Ulster Unionists, would bring the six counties of the insurrectionary movement have with a new spirit of conciliation and Ulster to follow the path that the been executed: nothing can undo co-operation growing up between Unionists in three Ulster counties their fate. But there are many others North and South, with an Irish Parare not unwilling to tread? Would both leaders and rank and fife, con- liament giving to our Unionist felnot the immediate operation of demned to long and weary years of low-countrymen an object lesson in Home Rule in twenty-six counties imprisonment and penal servitude, the marvellous opportunities for inevitably tend to draw the remain- Have we no care for these victims of national development and progress ing six to seek the enormous advan- a militarism Hun-like in severity? that such an assembly affords; or will tage of complete identity of interest Any settlement of the Irish problem it be to our advantage as Irish Nationand administration with the rest of must involve an amnesty for these alists to come before that conference Ireland? The acceptance of Lloyd men. We cannot accept freedom with our people in sullen revolt, the George's proposals by the Unionists while the victims of martial law re- country honeycombed with anti-

an opportunity to open the prison by a campaign of disruption and dis-Already Unionists in the South doors to those men, to welcome them sension, with all the healing influenand West are crying out against back into a new Ireland, which has ees of nearly forty years of a most exclusion in any shape or form. If broken with an evil past, and has seen successful constitutional movement, Home Rule was put into immediate the last of revolutionary outbursts smashed and discredited, with racial operation, would that hostility be and repressive savagery. If no settle- passions aroused, in their most appalany the less? Would it not be ment is come to, feeling in Ireland ling intensity, and all the forces that immensely strengthened? Would must inevitably become more inflam- have fought for Irish freedom amongst not all the Unionists in Leinster, ed. What prospect will there be under the English democracy disillusioned. Munster and Connaught, plus all the such circumstances of the release of embittered and antagonized by the Unionists in the three Ulster count the brave but misguided youths who fatal consequences of a rash and suities, which had come under the Irish risked their lives in what they believ- cidal rejection of the greatest chance all Ulster of its own accord to seek

tensity to get those who share their country are rejected, the Unionists their native land, but the friendly coreligious and political views in the of Ulster will set themselves deter- operation of our Unionist fellow-counremaining assembly in which they minedly to reorganize their forces try-men in building up a self-governwould exercise a great and, on mary against any scheme of Home Rule, ed, a prosperous and, above all, a questions, perhaps, a dominating They will no longer be committed to united Irish nation? This is the issue strive. Sir Edward Carson, on a power? In the Imperial Parliament acceptance of the principle of Self- the delegates to the forthcoming notabe occasion in the House of Com-Ulster Unionists would be utterly Government. They will have been Ulster Conference will have to face. hopeless and entirely negligible quantimensely strengthened by the Let there be no misconception. There a Home Rule Parliament winning the tity. On the balance between Nation suicidal folly of the Nationalists in is no third alternative. The English confidence of the Ulster Unionists, alist and Unionist representatives, the sacrificing the position of impreg- people will give us anything that we effectiveness of the Ulster Unionist nable strength which a National Gov- can agree amongst ourselves to desire—an Ireland, one and undivided, Party at Westminster would be practient, holding supreme authority accept; but they will not shoot down under a native legislature. Here ar tically nil. On the other hand, in a over twenty-six counties, would Ulster Unionists at the behest of his words: "I will say this, that i native Parliament the same forces confer. They will be able to apply those who reject the olive branch Home Rule is passed, much as I detest throughout the whole of Ireland themselves to the work of building up now offered. would form a strong, cohesive and the industrial and commercial pros- As I have pointed out, the exten- sponsibility for opposing it, my earncompelling influence at College Green, perity of Northeast Ulster and of in- sion of Home Rule to the six est hope, and I would say my earnest Self-interest would dictate to the creasing the political power in that counties is not defeated, but merely prayer, would be that the Government Unionists of the six counties portion of Ireland where they have delayed. The Nationalists in these of Ireland for the South and West

The Golden Opportunity.

that would appeal to Protestant that for fifty years Northeast Ulster sentiment and afford powerful safe- has been becoming steadily more guards for Protestant interests, Protestant and less Irish. Are we to whilst Nationalists would gladly accelerate the process? And if, as welcome into the councils of the some of the apostles of pessimism ment. It is not pleasant for them to in Ireland that you would find such nation men representing those great say, "Better wait for another fifty industrial concerns in the North- years," until Ulster has become east which are such a valuable asset almost completely Anglicized, and and of which all Ireland is so justly the Catholic Celtic section has grown proud. Lloyd George's scheme thus correspondingly weak and impotent puts into immediate operation forces what likelihood will there be then of that tend strongly to bring all Ireland bringing about the reunion of North into harmonious unity and co-opera- and South that is now within our tion. Might it not be that before the grasp? Meanwhile the rest of Iretime came when the Imperial Confer-land will be dissipating its energies, ence would assemble immediately not in the great and beneficent work problem, that problem would already of building up a prosperous and selfgoverned nation, but in the difficult and possibly fruitless task of trying In what position would the six to get back the golden opportunity

same position as the thirty-two in the resolution passed by the counties will be if they are rejected, Ulster Unionist Council, reference with this difference; that if a settle- was made to a "definite" exclusion of ment falls through, Ireland will be six Ulster counties. Immediately plunged into chaos; the forces of the opponents of Home Rule seized ascendency will have the upper upon this ambiguous adjetive and hand; English feeling will be antag- interpreted it as meaning permaonized, and Irish representatives in nent." As might be expected, the the Imperial Parliament will be nation was told that Mr. John Redforced into a position which, at a mond has misrepresented Lloyd time when the whole Empire is fight- George's proposals, and Irishmen Winter. ing for its very existence, may be were asked to discredit and disfraught with appalling disaster for the believe the explicit statement of the Irish leader. The precipitate rush There can be no standing still, and to declare that Mr. Redmond was there can be no progress. Every unworthy of credence is but an patriotic lover of his country must illustration of the whole spirit of look with feelings of trepidation, reckless desperation with which the almost despair, to a future in which apostles of dissension are bent upon no ray of light illumines the clouded the work of National destruction.

is being poisoned, and that well-inten-There is not a single honest Na- tioned but ill-informed persons and tionalist devoted to the ideal of Ire- public boards are being stampeded

immediately under the control of a Irishmen today are seething in under close and connected review." revolt against the military despotism Will it be better for Ireland to go into of any attempt to set up a Home main in British dungeons. We have constitutional societies, and poisoned

that has ever been offered to our peoexerting its power with increasing in- If the proposals now before the ple to win not only the freedom of

the advisability of joining hands been strengthening their position of counties will still have the full should prove such a success i strength of the entire Nationalist the future, notwithstanding all our representation of all Ireland to pro- anticipations, that it might be best tect their interests, and there is the for the interests of Ulster itself to additional safeguard that, until their future is definitely settled, no conten- come in with and form one unit in tions legislation affecting them can be relation to Ireland. I would be glad passed through the Imperial Parlia- to see such a state of affairs arising be asked to wait for a little while mutual confidence and good will longer, but will their position be made between all classes in Ireland as pleasanter by having Home Rule denied to the rest of Ireland in the mean-

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given to the forces fighting against Irish freedom? The dog in the manger policy is not one, I fancy, that would appeal to any section of Ulster

What the Ulster Unionists have been asking is to be allowed to remain under the Imperial Parliament. No one knows better than the Unionists of the Northeast of Ulster that such a claim is only part of the game of political tactics. They realize fully delays that any project involving any legislation at Westminster entails How would it be under Lloyd George's scheme? Whilst twenty-six counties would be able immediately to deal with their local wants in an assembly where Irish needs are the supreme consideration, the other six counties would be feebly trying to make their voices heard amidst the welter of conflicting and complex interests of a would have to go to the Imperial Par-

world-wide Empire. North-east Ulster liament for leave to carry out the sim plest measure of social reform or in dustrial development. What chance would the representatives of Northeast Ulster have of getting their wants attended to in such a legislative assembly? They would simply be swamped. Whatever their failings o prejudices, the people of Northeast Ulster have never lacked a keen ap preciation of business needs. Does anyone think they would not soon feel the pressure of an impossible position where their local wants would find ally smaller than would be wasted in a futile effort in a Parliament now more than ever devoted to the needs of an expanding Empire? It is not merely that Lloyd George's proposals open the way to a united Ireland; they make a united Ireland, under a native Parliament, an absolute necessity to the Orangemen of the North in quite as imperative a degree as to the Nationalists of the South. Can any sane Nationalist hesitate as to how he should act in this great crisis? We have been given a great opportunity. Let us not incur a terrible

responsibilty by lightly rejecting

proposal which brings the freedom

immediately into view. The enemies

of Home Rule, are right from their

point of view in calling on National-

ists the present offer. The putting of Home Rule into immediate operation in twenty-six counties would be the putting into operation of powerful and irresistible influences, tending steadand with cumulative effect to draw the protection and fostering care of a native Parliament. That is an ideal which appeals to the Orangeman as well as to the Nationalist. That is the goal towards which every patriotic Irishman should anxiously mons, foreshadowed the prospect of

an integral unit in a federal system. There is a tide in the affairs nations as well as of individuals. If we fail to take it at the flood, then, indeed, the future of the nation's life may be "bound in shallows and in miseries." The forthcoming

Ulster Conference should be a deliberative assembly whose decision should be the result not of preliminary mandates, but of unfettered discussion of all the facts.

No delegate should go to that conference determined to shut his ears to the voice of reason, and blind his eyes to obvious facts, or with his mind made up not to listen to argument. The delegates should not go as gramophones incapable of more than the reproduction of catch cries and shibboleths. Theirs is a weightier responsibilty, a responsibilty which may be betrayed but cannot be evaded. Ireland is being given a great chance. May God guide her sons to arrive at a wise decision which shall bring immediate benefit to our Fatherland, and open the way to a glorious and an early future in which all its children shall rejoice in their new-found freedom and fraternity. Let us not add another to what the Prime Minister has described as the "tragic series of missed and misused oppor



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