

The Anglo-American Alliance and Irish-Americans.

(By George McDermot, C.S.P., in The Catholic World.)

I was tempted to call the alliance proposed by certain persons between England and America the Chamberlain-American Alliance. But stating this thought all arose from a purpose in such a heading I take the subject up as a parable, now that the Local Government Bill for Ireland has passed the lower House (July 29th). The eventuality before it in the House of Lords may be either dismissed or taken up as the first-fruit of the imperial policy which Mr. Chamberlain promised would do more for Ireland than Mr. Gladstone's Home-Rule Bill had done. In connection with the proposed alliance and with regard to the attitude of Irish-Americans concerning it, the memoirs of Mr. Chamberlain's part to overthrow Mr. Gladstone must be re-visited, and of his breaking away from the alliance with Mr. Parnell to which he had voluntarily and affectionately bound himself.

THE KILMAINHAM TREATY

This latter branch of the change of treaty may need explanation. It is not in a position to say that a reciprocal treaty between him and Mr. Parnell, but there was a great deal more of the relations of formal alliance than could be found in what the Tories used to call the Kilmainham Treaty. On no other position could Mr. Chamberlain have gone to Mr. Parnell to request his support in an attack on the leadership of Mr. Gladstone. It was one of those incidents of dark craft we read of in the court-history of Russia. Mr. Chamberlain, like an impatient exarite, was anxious to come to the centre. He spoke to the Irish leader on the question of detaching the chief and as a bribe such a measure of Home Rule as the first himself might choose to frame. Mr. Parnell refused support to this treaty within the household. Mr. Chamberlain then asked letters from him to men in Ireland vouching for himself and Sir Charles Dilke, who with the seal of such letters on their mission would make a political campaign in that country. Such letters Mr. Parnell declined to give. I am not at all concerned about the rehabilitation of Mr. Parnell's political reputation, but I think those Nonconformists and Mr. Price-Hughes, who were so anxious to push Home Rule to the side, ought to have recollected how much the Irish majority had done in giving up to their scruples the great and unhappy deal.

Assuming now that Mr. Chamberlain considered that an alliance with Mr. Parnell was the method to advance the reforms needed in England, but that the termination of the Castle rule and the suppression of the Irish University were the conditions precedent to the reform in England, he was bound in honour to come to an agreement to such an alliance. It may have been an unflattering treaty, but the plain fact is, Mr. Chamberlain identified himself with the Parnell policy long before Mr. Gladstone took it up, and with an intensity of language far beyond anything ever expressed by the latter. It is unnecessary to say in such a case Mr. Parnell joined the Tories, and consequently Mr. Chamberlain was free to oppose his policy. It mistakes the reason of existence of the Irish party to regard it as one competent to enter into anything more than an alliance terminable at will, but it is surely the interest of that party to adhere to the side which espouses its views. The option of will is the means by which ability to it may be enforced against the local, Radical or Tory. Now, it is clear as light that, although independence of English parties was the theory of the Irish representation, circumstances established an alliance with the Liberals which Mr. Chamberlain, playing the role of Indian leader, made a veritable and binding one on himself. To this he had bound himself in honour and conscience.

HONOUR AND CONSCIENCE SHOULD RULE IN PUBLIC LIFE

In public life these rules, or are supposed to rule, men's proceedings. I assume the reality and not the supposition of the governing motive. It is at least respectful to think the dictator of honour and conscience have weight with the right honourable gentleman; I therefore will not argue the question of his dealing with the Irish policy as if he had them not. If the standard of political morality in any country is to be a person highly placed or aiming at high place is not excused if he breaks his word, violates a trust, betrays, enriches himself at the public expense, fills the public service with his relatives and creatures in disregard of fitness. There is a limit to the delinquencies a public man may commit with impunity in England or in Italy. A revolutionary minister in Italy will not escape criticism because, being charged with high responsibilities, it is implied that he deserves to be greatly trusted. Now, it is known that English politicians are the parasites of public life—they are not, like the rest of men, diplo-mats in the pursuit of nations, nor are the poor Italian, not even in the transatlantic world, consequently they are to be tried by the standard of their own pretence, which in words is that of public decency and justice. Judged by decency and justice, such as those which animate respectable and honourable men or such as come trippingly to the tongue of those who seek to be thought respectable and honourable. Mr. Chamberlain's accession from Mr. Gladstone on account of his Irish policy was a transparent

hypocrisy, his exit from his own policy concerning Ireland was the wilful abandonment of principle connected with that unhappy country one can remember its origin with the strong and determined enemies of the abuses of the people was the worst betrayal of party since Stratford paid the court against his former associate. It must not be a moment in supposed I compare him in ability to even in honesty with Stratford. The great benefactor of the sixteenth century exposed himself to a vast array of miseries lacked by the heroes and passions of the people, in this he almost succeeded despite the fettering cowardice of the cold and faithless master whom he served but Mr. Chamberlain has left behind him only the form of winking a government and delaying measures of popular reform.

TRUE ALONE TO HIS OWN ABILITIES

In recalling his action when Mr. Gladstone made Home Rule the cardinal measure of the Liberal party and watching him since one is amazed at the facility with which he played on the passions and prejudices of the working-classes. He came to the selfishness of the upper classes as a providential ally. In his denunciation of the Radical party, the Nonconformists must have seen their hopes of equality with Churchmen postponed with the landed gentry and the clergy could look for another term to the off-dreaded life of the Establishment. This was the result, and nothing could be more dishonest when confronted with the history of his public life. The late Mr. Bright from time to time said bitter things about the passion and the spite, but in his strongest words he never reached the acrid analysis of Mr. Chamberlain's policy. It would be framed by Mr. Chamberlain's onslaughts on the aristocracy, but a secret power was in the purpose of the latter with his clevering masses of working-men to treasure the pregnant hints scattered amid the flashes of his rhetoric. He would be bent over the hands of duchesses and their daughters he said. He spoke no more the doctrine of truth when hobnobbing with hereditary legislators—all was sent off to the limbo of forgotten pledges of reform.

DEPRIVING THE WORKING-CLASSES

That Mr. Chamberlain was worthy of the Liberal Unionist he led is clear, that no one ought to pity the wretched Irish landlords he duped is equally clear, but one regrets he should have succeeded in throwing dust in the eyes of the English working-men notwithstanding the proofs they had of Mr. Chamberlain's devotion to their political and personal interests. It was in this way—Mr. Gladstone, in introducing the Home Rule Bill of 1886, announced his intention of bringing in with it a measure to enable the tenants to purchase the few simple of their holdings on terms similar to those contained in the Purchase of Land Acts of 1870 and 1883, and the clauses of the Church Act of 1887. For this purpose he would require £50,000,000. I do not know of anything more unanticipated than the way Mr. Chamberlain and his allies handled this part of the scheme. First, £150,000,000 would be required, second, Mr. Gladstone was making a present of this immense amount of money to the Irish landlords whom the Irish people regard their lives in denouncing and who were regarded by the Irish people very much as Indians do a man-eating tiger. I have hardly patience to go on with the story of this infamous jugglery, but there are important considerations for Irishmen and Americans which render it imperative for me to proceed. It must be recalled Mr. Gladstone announced that £50,000,000 would be sufficient, because by the time more should be wanted a large part of the £50,000,000 would have been paid in and so on. The effect would be that the annual instalments payable became a revolving fund to meet all cases of purchase that might arise. It did not follow that all landlords would sell; Mr. Gladstone thought only the hopelessly encumbered ones would. Moreover, it was not a scheme of compulsory expropriation, so that as a matter of fact transactions between landlords and tenants would have to wait for completion until the recurring instalments would afford a fund. It imposed no risk at all upon the British taxpayer, yet upon this imaginary danger, evoked by the lurid eloquence of Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Gladstone, after his bill was defeated in the House, was again defeated at the polls.

COERCING THE IRISH

It was necessary to offer an alternative policy, so there came the promise of a Local Government Bill and the reality of a Coercion Act. The reader will remember that under the majority of Irish members of Parliament a term in prison that the Lord Mayor of Dublin and some provincial mayors did so, that adhered in town and country, that hardly a newspaper proprietor or editor except a Unionist, escaped a similar sentence, and that for the crowds of lesser notabilities the very numerous prisons with which Ireland is supplied as liberally as with barracks and post-houses were almost empty. But the shameless pretence concerning the £50,000,000 purpose held. The Unionist Government in 1886, and again that it is in power, has expended or appropriated that amount on schemes substantially identical with the rejected land pur-

chase proposed by Mr. Chamberlain. It was well known that Irish tenants would make any sacrifice to pay the instalments of purchase money. The present state of affairs is a result of the knowledge and acted on it when the measure known as the Ashbourne Act was passed. Almost all the great Irish proprietors have sold out under their advances. It has enabled them like the Duke of Abercorn to invest the proceeds of the sale of their Irish estates in the South African Chartered Company to employ in coaching the black jaguars of that region the funds to be the while, masters of Ireland to the hilt, and Irish sons to find the means of freedom at the distance of two continents. So sure is the payment of instalments that Mr. Chamberlain and other friends of Mr. Chamberlain and enemies of Ireland to their testimony. Mr. Justice Ross, who sits on the bench to his strenuousness in the cause of the land-owners, is ready to accept any offer of a grant, however extravagant. He knows that the sale of the land will accomplish anything in order to acquire the fee-simple of his holding. With an unshameful indifference to the security of the Treasury, he will accept a bid vastly in excess of the value of the land, and this he does for the benefit of landlords. Yet he and a host of others, in union with Mr. Chamberlain, shrank from their charge that Mr. Gladstone was robbing the Irish taxpayers for the benefit of that very class.

IN TOUCH WITH EXTRANGERS


We may dismiss the small fry of Toryism and Liberal Unionism, for Mr. Chamberlain, as a revolutionary radical in touch with the intriguers and nihilists, the communists of France, the anarchists of Germany, and the assassins of Italy, was the influence which precipitated upon the English scene the electric forces of jealousy, prejudice, and fear. Whatever a stigma could rest on the people of Ireland because of their strong Catholicity, Mr. Chamberlain allied it when appealing to what, in the highly figurative language of this age of shams, is called the Nonconformist conscience. With a face shameless as Agamemnon's in the estimate of Achilles, he called for professions of the loyal minority, though very few of the loyal minority had done the barest justice of his tenants against those whose oppressions had made their children of death. He carried the masses with him in England. More went down before the strength of his racial and religious hatred. Justice was banished as at other junctures, when the masses were roused to fury, as in the enticement of the English plot of the assassin of the Gordon of the East for which it became dangerous for an Irish labourer to work upon a farm, a factory-hand to be seen at his employment. To a length like this the Tories could have led the people against the policy of Mr. Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain did so because he had been so long identified with their cause against the Tories. Nothing more sinister has happened since the great men of England succeeded in releasing the landed interest from its primary obligation, and casting it upon the industry of commercial activity and the bread of industry.

LANDLORDISM A RECURRENT EVIL

To make this clear I call attention to Mr. Chamberlain's object in proposing a purchase bill with the Home Rule bill. One difficulty which might most probably confront the new legislation was that of Irish landlordism. It had ramifications in England, extending into every nook and crevice of society and involving themselves about the throne. A collision with it might spell disaster in Ireland. It was a power executive with the legal, judicial, and executive branches of the Government. The thought is the landlords of the land, translated the thought into decrees and judgments and sentences, when the Government carried out by hanging, imprisonment, or confiscation. This extraordinary social influence was old as the connection and the source of every evil. All the wars since the first adventurers landed in 1609 arose of invasion except in the island of Great Britain the armed Landlord of England. In this Anglo-Irish settlements began to enjoy in the Pale and in Palatine jurisdiction elsewhere sufficient security for a more or less successful development of the arts of peace, but newcomers drove such old English out into the Irish country, and these in turn pushed the natives upon the lands of other tribes. This is the beginning of the Irish land question, a problem which only grew in complication with each succeeding age, until we find in the last century the whole island three times confiscated, and parts so often confiscated that there is nothing resembling the shifting of possession save the incursive settlements of roaming Indian tribes in North America two centuries ago. To take this matter out of the way of a young Parliament was a thought as generous as it was wise. It was worthy of the great heart that conceived it, but the men who stood against it honestly have done irreparable injury to Ireland and the Empire, to those who corruptly stood against it ought to be held up upon England as public enemies, in Ireland and America as enemies of the human race, and of those the most mischievous is Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.

DEFERRED PROMISES

It is twelve years since he promised a Local Government Bill that would be more valuable than Mr. Gladstone's measure of Home Rule. Twelve years of trial and suffering have passed, but the promise is only on the road to be redeemed. It is in this stage after the



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expenditure of £20,000,000 in land purchase, several millions on enclosed districts, light railways, and a bill of £10,000,000 to the landlords to let the Local Government Bill pass. In addition the agencies of that land-war which turned the country into a region traversed by hostile forces, when ambulance wagons for evicted persons dying of fever or hunger went as a necessary part of the train, or for the convenience of such desperate men and women as in their madness flung themselves with naked, bleeding hands against the bayonets and volleys of soldiery and police. This is not a light-hearted recollection, and to Mr. Chamberlain it is mostly due, as are all those years of governmental terrorism under Mr. Balfour, which, in the violence of departure from constitutional forms recalls the curatorial system of rule so often disturbing the peace of India, and the exercise of which in Jamaica so alarmed the conscience of the British people that nothing save a bill of indictment against a Governor could satisfy it. During that delay a million of the people have gone, and we still, thanks to a few fools or traitors among the Irish representatives, can see no prospect of a better era.

THE UNDYING HATRED OF CHAMBERLAIN

There is one thing you may reckon on—the undying hatred of Mr. Chamberlain. It is the duty of Irish-Americans to make his influence a mockery in their country, to oppose with unrelenting vigilance any power or authority that favours him, so that, disappointed and disgraced by failure, he may retire from the sphere of an influence only exercised to gratify his vanity, his ambitions, his resentment. In looking at him dispassionately they still find him the betrayer of the Liberal party, the follower who tried to supplant his old chief, the intruder now endeavouring to ruin the reputation of his present chief. Honest men will have no difficulty in judging the credit he attached to any policy he starts, for one must eliminate from it every moral element by which a policy is made practicable in society there are essential principles by which its cohesion is maintained, in its national policies there are universal laws of right and justice which support intercourse. In this we are all agreed, but if a minister in private life has destroyed, as far as he could, the elements which hold together the State of which he is a member and in public life, where it is the law of nations in a sense where it is the law of enlightened humanity, it becomes the duty of every one to treat him as beyond the law of society and international courtesy.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN ALLIANCE

Such a man as Mr. Chamberlain His proceedings to entrap America and Germany into alliances have been characterized by one British statesman as "toulting" by another as "begging." I am not so discourteous as his own countrymen, but I ask where is

the advantage to America to string from such an alliance? I have spoken of the subject with reference to Mr. Chamberlain; I shall discuss it in the abstract, and show, if space permits, that such an alliance is based on the suggestion of an immoral compact, and is intended for the promotion of a wicked policy, the main advantage of which would be found to rest with England. The idea started is that the United States will give to England the part of the Philippines they do not mean to retain, and the justification for this is the Peckskillian one that "British civilization and British rule will be for the benefit of the Islanders" (National Review, June). It is hard to avoid reference to other able men who have had a long experience of that rule and civilization. We are informed in this publication, which is so often favoured with the lucubrations of Mr. Chamberlain, and never without a nod on his high jolly by faithful friends that if it is an advantage to England to own a new Asiatic possession she can probably add to the empire without much trouble. This is for an alliance in pursuance of Mr. Chamberlain's aim is undelivered in its end. It is made at the very moment the "toulting" of the right honorable gentleman has become the subject of dignified and regretful criticism on the part of the English public man and the rally of the Continental press. The honor of the Radical section of the Liberal party is saved. It was that section which stood by America in the Civil War when the ruling and moneyed classes were equipping privateers to prey upon her commerce, and trying to compel a recognition of the independence of the Confederacy.

DEEP-SEATED ANTI-PATHY TO AMERICA

The same classes had no better name to describe Mr. Gladstone's agreement to refer the Alabama claims to arbitration than "surrender." This cannot be called ancient history, like letting loose Indians on the colonists, or like the war of 1812 to maintain a right to impress American seamen, but such points are properly borne in mind when, mingled with the nauseating gush of coinship, come—the insolent attack of Mr. Chamberlain on the Irish defenders of America. How rest his last part intercourse. In this we are all agreed, but if a minister in private life has destroyed, as far as he could, the elements which hold together the State of which he is a member and in public life, where it is the law of nations in a sense where it is the law of enlightened humanity, it becomes the duty of every one to treat him as beyond the law of society and international courtesy.

careful observation of the difficulty it moving the American troops had rear-ward them? It all comes hollow as a sceptic, but for the sake of the most important interests of Irish and America we wish to do our part. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 215.)