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LONDON, SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 1919

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

In the plebiscite which the Gov-
ernment proposes to take next Fall
on Prohibition in this province two
questions, according to the informa-
tion given out, seem to be decided
upon: (1) Are you in favor of the
Ontario Temperance Act? (2) Are
you in favor of the sale of beer and
wine? To these the newspapers
supporting the Government have in-
timated may be added a third: Are
you in favor of allowing alcoholic
beverages in private homes?

Let us try to get at the underlying
principle on which such a question
is referred to such a tribunal and to
see what the acceptance of this prin-
ciple involves. It is quite possible
to do this dispassionately though the
whole question of Prohibition—and
for that matter nearly every political
question on which the people's ver-
dict is sought—is made an appeal to
the emotions, the passions, the pre-
judices or the self-interest of the
voter rather than an appeal to his
reasoned judgment and natural sense
of equity and justice.

The principle of restriction and
regulation of the traffic in alcoholic
beverages has long been admitted as
one justified by considerations of
public order and the general social
welfare; and Prohibition within cer-
tain limits may be considered as the
extreme application of that principle
strained to the breaking-point; abso-
lute Prohibition departs altogether
from the principle of restriction and
regulation in the public interest and
bases itself on entirely different
grounds.

Why ask the people whether or
not they are in favor of alcoholic
beverages in private homes? Why
give a moment's consideration to the
consultation of the people on a
purely private matter? It is evi-
dent that there is opposition to such
a course, but it is equally evident
that such a course must be
advocated.

There is a tendency to give a mean-
ing to democracy which is as sub-
versive of all true liberty as is any
other form of absolutism. Have the
people or a majority of them a right
to command whatever they please? Are
they the ultimate tribunal in
matters of private conduct? The
right to command involves the cor-
responding duty of obedience. Are
we in conscience bound to obey
whatever it may be their good pleas-
ure to ordain? If so, where is indi-
vidual liberty? or liberty of con-
science? or any other form of liberty
that is worth while? If we concede
this right to the people or a majority
of them then the people taken col-
lectively are the absolute master of
every man taken individually. Now
this is absolutism, and absolutism
is incompatible with individual
liberty.

Under a monarchy the monarch is
the State. "L'Etat c'est moi," "I
am the State" said Louis XIV. and
he expressed the whole theory of
absolute monarchy. Under an
aristocracy the nobility are the
State and consequently if the State
is absolute the nobles, the junkers,
the aristocrats, are also absolute. If
they require the many to be hewers
of wood and drawers of water to
them, hewers of wood and drawers of
water the many must feel it their
duty to be. Here, for the many, is
absolutism as much as under abso-
lute king, kaiser or czar. Everybody
admits this. But it is less true
under a democracy where the people
in their associated capacity are held
to be absolute? The people are the
State, and the State is absolute. Is
not this freedom? Yes, for the State,

Just as the State was free under
Louis XIV., under the Kaiser, the
junkers, the Magyar aristocracy or
the Czar. But for the individual is
it freedom? There are no kings, no
kaisers, no junkers, no czars; but
the people, in this perverted con-
ception of democratic liberty, may
exercise all the power over the indi-
vidual that kings, kaisers or junkers
ever had or desired to have. It may
not be quite so easy to get a majority
in a democratic State; but if there
is no limit to the power of the
majority the democratic State be-
comes as absolute as that of the
monarch who declares: "L'Etat c'est
moi." And the tyranny of the abso-
lute majority is the more odious and
insufferable because it is practised
in the name of liberty and democracy.
Whatever has been done under the
most absolute monarchy or the most
lawless aristocracy may be reenacted
under a pure democracy if it be once
laid down in principle that the
majority has the absolute right to
govern.

It is not the physical force of the
majority that is to be dreaded, but
the doctrine that legitimates every
act the majority may choose to per-
form; and therefore teaches them to
look for no standard of right or
wrong beyond their own will. To
the physical force of numbers may be
opposed the moral force of right.
The tendency, all too evidently the
growing tendency, to make the
majority of the people the ultimate
tribunal legitimates every act for
which a majority of votes can be
obtained. Flatterers of the people
take the place of the old time flatter-
ers of the kings; and the demagogue
is as unlovely as the sycophantic
courtier. "You have absolute power,
use it thus and so" is just as dan-
gerous, just as immoral when ad-
dressed to the sovereign people as
when it used to be addressed to the
sovereign king ruling by "divine
right."

No civil power can be absolute,
whether it be that of king, aristo-
cracy or democracy. Every form of
government must be limited by
justice, for all power is from God
Who is absolute Justice. When civil
power is not thus limited whether it
be democratic, aristocratic or royal
we have the rule of arbitrary human
will instead of the reign of justice.
Not Americans only but every indi-
vidual has the inalienable right to
life, liberty and the pursuit of happi-
ness. The State, except for grave
and sufficient reasons, may not inter-
fere with the liberty of the individual.
The State was made for man, not
man for the State. The State no
matter how democratic in form can
never be regarded as absolute with-
out reducing the individual to slav-
ery. As in days gone by liberty-
loving subjects withstood the tyranny
of kings so in our day we need
public spirited and enlightened citi-
zens who have the courage to with-
stand the tyranny of the majority of
the people; to withstand the very
essence of all tyranny, the absolutism
of the State.

To come back to the Prohibition
plebiscite. The question for the
Government to decide is not whether
undue and unwarranted interference
with individual liberty in the matter
of alcoholic beverages will command
a majority of votes but whether the
State has any right to interfere be-
yond the requirements of public
order and social welfare. Not
whether the proposed legislation is
popular but whether it is right and
just and based on a principle univer-
sal in its application.

It is an old heresy that wine is
evil. Abstinence from the use of
wine was one of the tenets of
Gnosticism in the second century.
Tatian, the founder of the sect known
as the Eucratites, forbade the use of
wine, and his adherents refused to
make use of it even in the Sacra-
ment of the Altar; in its place they
used water. These heretics men-
tioned by St. Irenaeus (Adv. Haer.,
I, xxx) are known as Hydroparastes,
Aquiarians, and Eucratites. The
great Manichaean heresy followed a
few years later, professing the great-
est possible aversion to wine as one
of the sources of sin. They made
use of water in the celebration of
Mass. (Cath. Encyc.)

In the life of Cosmas, 54th Patri-
arch of Alexandria, we read that the
Egyptian Church had much to suffer
at the hands of the Mohammedans.
Among other things, the Arabs, them-
selves total abstainers since the days
of Mohammed, forbade the use of
wine under any pretext whatever, so
that it could neither be bought or
sold. The consequence was that the
Christians were deprived of one of
the essential requisites for the cele-

bration of the divine mysteries.
("The Scriptural use of the word
wine." Eccl. Rev. Feb. 1915.)

Now the revival of these old
heresies in modern times would not
concern us very greatly—heresies
have a habit of recurring—were it
not for the revival at the same time
of the pagan idea of the absolute
state. If the people are the ultimate
tribunal in this matter of Prohibition
what is to hinder a plebiscite being
asked for and granted on the ques-
tion: "Are you in favor of allowing
wine for sacramental purposes?"
And if the majority should decide
that Prohibition should be absolute,
bone-dry, with no exceptions; then
it would be a crime to celebrate Mass.
More, if we admit the modern, liberty-
destroying interpretation of democ-
racy, it would be treason against the
sovereign will of the majority of the
people.

A principle must hold good in all
cases; it must be of universal appli-
cation. The horrors of Bolshevism
would not be lessened a particle if
the Soviet Governments of Russia
had the majority of the people be-
hind them. The principle that the
majority have the absolute right to
impose their will on all the people is
the very essence of tyranny, and is
essential Bolshevism as well.

Mohammedans, Manichaeans or
Methodists may hold to total abstin-
ence from all alcoholic beverages
as a religious tenet if they choose;
but when they are in the majority
or get the majority to their
way of thinking on this matter,
if they impose their religious
tenet or honest moral conviction on
others by civil enactment, they are
as intolerant as the Arabs of the
ninth century.

It may be said that there is no
fear of such an eventuality; this is
a Christian country. But that is a
flimsy assurance if we surrender the
very fundamental principle of democ-
ratic liberty to the advocates of
democratic absolutism. The choice
does not lie between the abuses of
the old license system and Prohibition;
there are many alternatives. But
there is a matter of principle
involved in Prohibition; a principle
which profoundly affects civil, reli-
gious and individual liberty.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

LOOK HERE UPON THIS PICTURE:

"That Governments derive their
just rights from the consent of the
governed."

"That peoples and provinces are
not to be bartered about from sov-
ereignty to sovereignty as though they
were mere chattels and pawns in the
game."

"That all well-defined national
aspirations are to be accorded the
utmost satisfaction."

"Shall the military power of any
nation or group of nations be suffered
to determine the fortunes of peoples
over whom they have no right to
rule except the right of force?"

"Shall strong nations be free to
wrong weak nations and make them
subject to their purpose and inter-
est?"

"No man or groups 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 interest of the strongest."

"This is what we mean when we
speak of a permanent peace, if we
speak sincerely, intelligently and
with a real knowledge and compre-
hension of the matter we deal with."

AND ON THIS:

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Taft, the
great protagonist of the League idea
in the States, "the Covenant needs
revision. It is not symmetrically
arranged, its meaning has to be dug
out and the language is ponderous
and in diplomatic patois."

Senator Lodge says that not only
opponents differ from advocates in
interpreting the terms of the League;
but opponents differ from opponents
and advocates from advocates. And
now read the daily accounts of the
Peace Conference. In this morning's
Globe G. S. Adam writes: "It is im-
possible to give a clear picture of the
chaos. The Council of Ten does not
seem to have made up its mind on a
number of important principles. . ."

Practically no one is satisfied with
the League terms in present shape
yet we are told that any attempt to
revise leads to insuperable diffi-
culties and endangers the whole pro-
ject.

The Delegates of the Great Powers
and many minor ones with plenipo-

tentiary powers can not pacify the
warring nations even while delimit-
ing their boundaries; Italy threatens
to withdraw if she does not have her
own way; etc., etc., etc.

Contrast the pictures. The lofty,
sonorous and evidently sincere pro-
clamation by President Wilson of
the principles on which permanent
peace must be based:

"These are the issues," said Presi-
dent Wilson, Sept. 27th last, "and
they must be settled by no arrange-
ment or compromise or adjustment
of interests but definitely and once
for all and with a full and unequiv-
ocal acceptance of the principle that
the interest of the weakest is as
sacred as the interest of the strong-
est."

And now the helpless President is
swamped in a chaos of adjustment
and compromise and must abandon
his own principles at every second
turn in the hope of preserving the
semblance of a League of Nations
which may be rejected even by his
own constitutional advisers, the
United States Senate.

And just read this frank admission
by Henry G. Wales (correspondent of
the Chicago Tribune and the Toronto
Globe) that the pretended League of
Nations is the merest camouflage for
a new balance of power arrange-
ment:

Paris, March 21.—The United
States will add the necessary weight
to Great Britain to make the old pre-
war balance of power remain among
the English speaking races, is the be-
lief of close students of the inter-
national political situation. Al-
though the League of Nations
tensibly will do away with such
alliances as bound up the Entente
powers, it is believed that England
and America, by the very nature of
world events, will come closer to-
gether politically and economically
than ever before, and their repre-
sentatives on the Council of the
League of Nations are expected
always to vote solidly together.

And this further and franker prog-
nosis:

If the League of Nations degene-
rates into a weak, flabby, airy
scheme Great Britain and the United
States will virtually become allies, it
is forecast, holding the world's
balance of power and commanding
the respect of any other alliance
formed, no matter how strong.
And even at this Barmecide feast
there sits the ghost of the murdered
Banquo—Ireland.

AN INTERNATIONAL QUESTION

That the principles proclaimed
during the War as fundamental, essen-
tial and bed-rock principles of democ-
racy be applied to Ireland is the
crux of the Irish question at the
present time. Shamelessly unani-
mous and uniformly weak are the
arguments of a large section of the
Canadian press that Ireland's status
is a question of domestic British
politics. We may soon expect to see
this out-worn sophistry discarded.
Here are two rather remarkable
witnesses to the fact that the parrot
cry of Ireland's being a domestic
question is not making any serious
impression or even receiving any
attention either in England or the
States.

Henry M. Hyde is an American
journalist sent to investigate condi-
tions in Ireland whose letters are
being published in the Toronto Globe.
In his first letter Mr. Hyde writes:

It is a delicate matter for a for-
eigner—an alien who must register
with the police on entering and
leaving a British city—to discuss
with frankness what former Presi-
dent Taft declared to be purely a
matter of British domestic policy.
Before I went to Ireland I talked the
matter over with a considerable
number of British statesmen and
leaders of opinion. I found a uni-
form opinion that Ireland had become
an international question. They
were quite willing that an
American journalist should visit
Ireland, make his own investigations
and describe fully and fairly what he
found and saw.

That is a bad jolt for the "purely
domestic question" theorists in Can-
ada. Amongst a considerable number
of British statesmen and leaders of
opinion he found "a unanimous
opinion that Ireland had become an
international question."

The second is none other than that
clear-headed, human-hearted English-
man, Philip Gibbs, who needs no
introduction wherever the English
language is spoken or read. He is
keenly desirous of promoting friendly
relations and mutual understand-
ing between America and Great
Britain. He tells of much he found
to gladden his heart in his conversa-
tions with many Americans; he then
proceeds:

In Washington which I found as
beautiful, with its white buildings
under a blue sky, as a dream city of
the world's capital, I had other
conversations which were more dis-
quieting. They were conversations
about the state of Ireland and the
renaissance of a great strain of

emotion among Irish-Americans on
behalf of Ireland's liberty and inde-
pendence. For a time popular sen-
timent swung away from Ireland be-
cause of her attitude in the War and
her hostility to England in her hour
of need. But now that the War is
over and many little nations are
pleading for self government, the
position of Ireland is again foremost
in the thoughts of those out here
who belong to her blood and faith.

The movement for Irish independ-
ence is growing, and yesterday in
New York I saw the outward and
visible sign of its strength. It was
St. Patrick's Day, and the City of
New York was held up for a parade
of Irish-Americans who marched
down Fifth Avenue with bands and
banners. It was miles long with
long columns of men and women,
and all about were hundreds of thou-
sands of people in the crowds wear-
ing the shamrock and the green flag.
One banner led on by priests bore the
words, "We Stand for Free and In-
dependent Ireland" and another carried
by women and girls said, "England;
Damn Your Conscience, We Want
Our Country."

In the crowds I overheard many
conversations which convinced me
utterly that there will be no absolute
friendship between England and
America until Ireland's desires have
been granted, and I prayed to God
that this may happen to safeguard
the peace of the world, which de-
pends upon American good-will.

There is enough and to spare in
intercourse with Americans of any
and all classes to convince utterly
any open-minded man of any nation-
ality that "there will be no absolute
friendship between England and
America until Ireland's desires have
been granted."

That is the potent fact which Mr.
Gibbs recognizes. Not the Sinn
Fein but the "loyalist" or "imper-
ialist" who obstinately closes his eyes
to this undeniable condition of things
is the enemy within the gates of
whom the British Empire has most
to fear.

SOME ADVANTAGES OF A SMALL PARISH

By THE GLEANER

It may be very convenient to be a
member of a large congregation,
where the ordinary revenue is more
than ample to defray the expenses
of all work in connection with the
church and altar. It certainly re-
lieves the parish priest and the indi-
vidual parishioner of much worry
and responsibility; but there are
some compensations in a small pa-
rish that amply repay both. A re-
ference to a few of these may convince
some struggling pastors that they
are more blessed than they wot of,
and deliver us, mayhap, from the
intolerable ecstasies of the lady who
has been to the city where every-
thing is "so grand."

First of all, a small parish is well
calculated to foster the spirit of pa-
triotic pride. The city Catholic may
be proud of his grand church, but it
is not his in the same sense as the
pretentious one belongs to each in-
dividual member of a small con-
gregation. The pride of the former
lacks the personal element, while
the elation of the latter is that of a
mother over her first born. The
faithful people of a small parish have
had to give until it hurt that God
might be welcomed to a suitable
dwelling place in their midst.
Everything that meets their eyes on
Sunday recalls the personal labors
and sacrifices that they have made.
They feel that the house of God is
their house, not only because it is
their father's house but because they,
as one large family, have built and
adorned it. This sentiment is not to
be found, in the same degree at least,
in large parishes where individual
effort seems swallowed up in the
grandeur of the accomplishment.

Then again, the smallness of a
parish tends to the cultivation of the
virtue of fraternal charity. Some
may be incredulous on this point,
remembering the little bickerings
and jealousies and the deal of gossip-
ing that is associated with parish
work in a small mission; but on ex-
amination it will be found that we
are right in our contention. Because
a parish is small everyone must do
his or her part—especially her part.
If a bazaar or lawn fete is announced
for the raising of funds, all feel that
they must cooperate, not only be-
cause the help of each one is needed,
but also because shirkers cannot es-
cape unnoticed and uncondemned as
they do so often where there are
plenty of willing workers to carry
the burden. This, by the way is a
good thing for the shirkers who
often become more religious when
they have done something for the
church and consequently feel that it
owes them something. All must
work, and work together. This
brings the members of the parish in-
to intimate relations with one an-
other. Of course this may be the

source of some little frictions, such
as often arise in a family, but this is
not an evidence that the members
of the parish love one another less
than do the members of a large con-
gregation in which there are no dis-
putes. No one will say that because
there is an occasional misunder-
standing between members of the
Smith family, while all the members
of that family live on friendly
terms with the Jones family across
the way, that the Smiths have less
love for one another than they have
for the Joneses. Let there be some
trouble or misfortune in a home in a
small parish, and see how soon those
little differences are forgotten.

It is very nice to have Sisters take
charge of the altar, to have the ves-
tments laid out for the priest every
morning, and a well-starched amice
that scratches his neck; but the
ladies of such a parish are deprived
of a very great privilege, the privilege
of following in the footsteps of the
holy women who ministered to Our
Lord's personal needs during His
public life, and who prepared clean
linens and sweet spices for His
burial. It is customary in some
small parishes for the members of
the Altar Society to take charge of
the altar for a month, each in her
turn. This they esteem a great
privilege, as it brings them so near
to their Divine Master Who dwells in
the tabernacle. It entails, it is true,
some sacrifice of time and labor, but
it is a labor of love for which they
feel that they are well repaid. More-
over, it can be made the occasion of
imparting to them, and through them
to their children, a knowledge of the
ceremonies of the Church, the names
of the sacred vessels and vestments,
of the proper manner of arranging
everything about the altar for Mass
and Benediction, and of the correct
way to prepare the various linens—
all of which information is, to say
the least, a very desirable accom-
plishment in a Catholic woman.

The pastor of a small parish, of
course, has his troubles. He has to
bestir himself to make ends meet.
He has to forego many little luxuries
that his confreres with ampler funds
may enjoy. Brought into closer re-
lationship with his people than is
the parish priest of a large congre-
gation, he must exercise more discre-
tion and diplomacy in order to avoid
any disruption in his "parvulus
grex;" for he it is known that it is
easier to rule a battalion than it is to
rule a company. But he has his
compensations. He is not a slave to
the door bell. He has time for study
and legitimate recreation. Above
all, he enjoys the consolations of
that priestly sense of paternity, the
consciousness of which becomes
necessarily obscured in the mind of
the pastor who has to grapple with
large business propositions and who
cannot know personally the members
of his flock, many of whom are here
today and away tomorrow. In the
little parish the priest can truly say:
"I know mine and mine know me."
He knows all the lambs of his flock;
for he has baptized them and given
them their first Communion. He
knows each family, its joys and its
sorrows, the failings and virtues of
its members. Yes more, he knows
every black sheep, every prodigal.
Not only does he know them, but all
the parish knows them and thinks of
them and joins with the priest when
he prays during these Lenten days:
"Spare, O Lord, spare thy people
and give not Thine inheritance to
reproach." We can well imagine a
venerable pastor, who has been pro-
moted to a large parish, saying: "I
would rather be chatting with old
John Hogan or listening to the chil-
dren's voices in my little choir, than
to be entertained by the self-con-
scious wisdom of some of my new
prominent parishioners or the gush-
ing compliments of the leading
soprano, whose vocal flights distract
me at the Holy Sacrifice."

Let us add, however, in conclusion
that we are not so old yet that we
would care to have the above senti-
ments interpreted too literally in
our regard by episcopal authority.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

COMMENTING on the prohibition
movement in the United States, an
overseas contemporary, while wish-
ing the bill every success, expresses
the hope that it will produce more
soda water than hypocrisy.

"COMPREHENSIVENESS" HAS ever
been the distinguishing note of
Anglicanism and it was strikingly
manifested in the service of thank-
sgiving for the cessation of hostilities
in St. George's cathedral, Jerusalem,
on Nov. 19th. Not only did the

Orthodox Archbishop of Sinai partici-
pate and the Armenian, Coptic,
Syrian, and Abyssinian Bishops of
Jerusalem, but the Jewish, Grand
Rabbi, and the Mohammedan Mufti
had each a part in the Te Deum,
which was sung on the occasion.
After this who will dare to assert
that the Anglican Church is not
"Catholic!"

LACKING FOR the moment any other
object for vituperation the Toronto
Telegram has "hit the trail" again
in pursuit of Bishop Budka, the
Ruthenian prelate who was placed
under arrest early in the War on a
trumped up charge of aiding the
enemy. The fact that upon investi-
gation by competent authority he
was immediately released and exoner-
ated, is of course of no conse-
quence in such a quarter. The Tele-
gram would die of sheer inanition if
it had not some such delectable
morsel to feed upon, even if it be, as
it usually is, purely imaginary.

THE ISSUE without protest or objec-
tion of Ontario charters to two
spiritualist organizations may be
reckoned as a sign of the times.
And the claim filed; "to teach the
law of the universe in accordance
with the Master's teaching," must, of
necessity, be regarded with com-
placency by a dominantly Protestant
community.

FROM CATHOLIC faith to spiritist
credulity, by the circuitous path of
agnosticism, is the singular life his-
tory of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He
has recently published what re-
viewers call an "extraordinary" book
on the subject of psychic phenomena.
Sir Arthur was born of Catholic
parents, studied as a youth under the
Jesuits at Stonyhurst, graduated
later as a physician, abandoned all
faith in the supernatural and became
a pronounced materialist. He has
now taken the rebound from the
latter extreme to the most advanced
forms of spiritism, to the extent
even of having himself developed
mediumistic powers.

AS A MATERIALIST Sir Arthur was
accustomed to refer to Christian
teaching in regard to the super-
natural as "essentially immoral."
In the light of his recent history it
would be interesting to know if this
opinion, proclaimed as it usually is
with great decision and show of
virtuous indignation, has undergone
any revision. For spiritism is
nothing if not the very antithesis of
materialism. And if the tried beliefs
of thousands of years, supported by an
authority which, even if its divine in-
stitution be not for the moment insist-
ed upon, won and held the adhesion of
the world's wisest and best in all
ages, in what position stands the
vulgar tenets of the mushroom spiritism
of the hour? This constitutes a
problem which Sir Arthur might
very well find worthy of solution.

THE VETERAN, published in the in-
terests of returned soldiers, thinks
that since a workman was recently
awarded \$2,000 for the loss of three
fingers, the forty dollars given as
monthly allowance to women whose
husbands were killed in action
may be regarded as something like
an insult from a grateful country.
It cannot be denied that there is
much to be said for this view. This
whole question of pensions to the
men who upheld their country's
honor on many a bloody field, or to
their widows and children, has yet
to come before the jury of the people
of Canada.

IT IS SAID that Sir Douglas Haig
has refused to accept any honor or
reward for his own service to the
nation until clearly defined steps
have been taken by the British Gov-
ernment to make decent provision
for disabled officers and their families.
This, if correct, sets the stamp of
true greatness upon the victorious
Field Marshall. But should not the
men of the ranks receive equal
consideration? The discrimination
along this line in Canada is becoming
a public scandal, and cries aloud for
adjustment.

"THE BLOODY YPRES salient," as it
has come to be called, the ground of
which is forever hallowed by the
blood of Canadian soldiers, and upon
which they have left indelibly the
imprint of their heroism and sacri-
fice, is to be left in its state of tragic
ruin as a memorial of its unconquer-
able defenders, and as damning evi-
dence to future generations of the
infamy and malice of the Hun. The
city itself, once beautiful and pros-