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LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1920

THE IRISH QUESTION IN AMERICAN POLITICS

Under this heading we reproduce elsewhere in this issue an interesting article by A. F. Whyte, Associate Editor of The New Europe, an important review published in England which deals, as its name indicates, with post-war problems, and which counts amongst its contributors some of the ablest of European thinkers and writers.

Despite the parrot talk of reactionary imperialism about Ireland's being a "domestic question," it is hardly necessary to say that such a review, like some of the foremost British statesmen, is compelled to recognize that Ireland is one of the great international questions confronting the statesmanship and conscience of the civilized world.

It is not surprising that Mr. Whyte's British prejudices should lead him to minimize the overwhelming American sentiment in favor of the foundation principle of Americanism being applied to Ireland. It is doubtful, indeed, if he himself believes that there is much in his "explanations" of unquestionable American manifestations of pro-Irish sentiment; rather do they seem to be the sugar-coating for the all-important truths he feels impelled as a Britisher to drive home to the British mind—both at home and in the States.

Take, for instance, this: "Meanwhile, during the last six months America has experienced the visitations of two aggressive bands of Irish propagandists: the first from Sinn Fein and the second from Uster. Judging solely from the nature of the reception given to them they might both claim that they had caught the ear of the American people; and so they did—in the strict sense of the word."

Hard pushed must Mr. Whyte have been for sugar coating when he pretends the notorious Cootie fizzle is on all fours with de Valera's marvellous success.

According to the open avowal of its investigator, Lord Beaverbrook, the object of the Uster delegation was to inject the rancor of sectarian prejudice into the Irish question in the States. The delegates confined themselves to the churches, addressing only four public meetings all told, and to these admission was by ticket. They refused repeated challenges to discuss the question openly; they were disowned and denounced by prominent Protestants, lay and clerical; and even in Toronto—which they acknowledged surpassed all other places in its reception of them—their coarse bigotry was repudiated in and by the public press.

De Valera was officially received as President of the Irish Republic by over forty mayors of cities, and by eighteen governors of States. The other day when he was refused such official recognition, the fact was announced in all our papers; but he was still given a cordial reception as a distinguished guest.

The House of Representatives by a vote of 216 to 41 passed this resolution, March 4th, 1919:

"That it is the earnest hope of the Congress of the United States of America, that the Peace Conference now sitting in Paris and passing upon the rights of the various peoples will favorably consider the claims of Ireland to self-determination."

And on the 6th of June the United States Senate, with just one dissenting vote, passed the following resolution:

"That the Senate of the United States earnestly requests the American Plenipotentiary Commissioners at Versailles to endeavor to secure for Eamon

de Valera, Arthur Griffiths, and Count George Noble Plunkett, a hearing before the said Peace Conference, in order that they may present the cause of Ireland, and resolved further, That the Senate of the United States expresses its sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people for a government of its own choice."

Mr. Whyte's bracketing together of the "two aggressive bands of Irish propagandists" can only be explained by his determination to minimize the force and extent of that sturdy American sentiment in which Irish national claims find such congenial atmosphere, and from which the factionist "Uster" appeal branched and sought the more congenial surroundings of little anti-Catholic cliques in the churches.

Other like assertions or insinuations may be passed over without comment; indeed Mr. Whyte's own emphatic statements are the best comment on his minimizing explanations—or sugar-coating for the pills he wishes to administer to purblind and prejudiced fellow-countrymen.

He could hardly overlook the over-worked theory of the "Irish vote." But immediately afterwards he makes this curious and significant admission:

"There is a widespread interest in the Irish question which is just as marked in regions where Irish political influence is negligible as it is in Boston or New York. Among the numerous questions constantly asked of me by bankers, manufacturers, business men, clergymen, journalists and professors two stand out in great prominence of all the rest."

"First—Where is labor going in Great Britain?"

"Second—What are you going to do with Ireland?"

Mr. Whyte was surprised to find that regard for England, love for Great Britain, the land of their forefathers, was at the root of much of the American interest in the Irish question.

"Indeed, the source of much American interest in the Irish question is found in a deep-seated attachment to England (which I find more widespread than I had expected) and a hope that the practical statesmanship of Britain, which has hosts of admirers in America, will not fail in its most crucial task."

That is undoubtedly true. And not only amongst those of British ancestry is there deep-seated attachment to England. English is the language of America, English the literature, English the political ideals and institutions. And, no matter what the origin, in a generation or two English language and literature exerts a tremendous influence on all Americans. The unifying influence of a common language and literature should make a League of English-speaking nations a reality without treaty or covenant.

But Ireland bars the way. The outstanding and flagrant injustice of England's treatment of Ireland is not less evident to the thinking American than to General Smuts who had the courage to tell Englishmen that Ireland's just claims must be conceded or the British Empire cease to exist.

Not the Irish vote, not the politicians, but "the entire American people," Mr. Whyte emphatically asserts, "strongly desire to see the Irish question settled."

"Having discussed Ireland in America with hundreds of individuals, scores of private groups, as well as in public addresses before Chambers of Commerce, rotary clubs and university audiences, I conclude at the end of an eight-month tour that the attitude of the entire American people is a strong desire to see the Irish question settled."

This being so it is difficult to see how the importance of the Irish question in American politics has been or can be exaggerated.

But a careful reading will disclose Mr. Whyte's constant preoccupation with the republican solution of the Irish question, and his relief at finding that all Americans are not utterly committed to the Sinn Fein policy, but would welcome any solution satisfactory to both Ireland and England. He finds Irishmen, professed Sinn Feiners, much of the same mind.

"When you get to grips with these gentlemen you find that the solution that they are prepared to accept so closely resembles Sir Horace Plunkett's Dominion plan that they have no right to call themselves by the name of Sinn Fein. I cannot help believing that their adhesion to the Irish republican movement is purely tactical, based on the assumption that unless they ask for the whole baker's shop they will not even get half a loaf."

We have no doubt that he would find Irishmen in the States, as he

would the world over, entirely satisfied with any solution which would satisfy the Irish of the motherland.

Mr. Whyte has the good sense and honesty after his eight months sojourn in the States not to claim that the Lloyd George Home Rule Bill is that triumph of British statesmanship which is going to make possible cordial Anglo-American relations. He makes much of the half-hearted conversion of British Conservatives to something less than a half-hearted Home Rule measure. He pleads and insists that this is an important advance which he hopes will be "widely grasped in the United States." And he intimates that this is but the first step, the step that costs, as the French saying has it, And he makes this half-promise, half-prophecy to justice-loving Americans:

"That obstacle has already been half removed, and with its removal the Irish question can at last be lifted out of the confusing atmosphere of British party politics and has some fair chance of being treated on its real merits."

His conclusions from his prolonged study on the spot of conditions in America must be instructive if keenly disappointing to Englishmen. The fifth and sixth of these conclusions should be illuminating:

"Fifth—In present circumstances British propaganda on the Irish question is practically useless in the United States, and, therefore—"

"Sixth—The first task on which the British friends of America should bend their energies is to make an enduring settlement in Ireland. Once Dublin and London are reconciled, we shall be on the high road to good relations between America and Great Britain."

"British friends of America" is rather naive. The friends of England, the friends of the British Empire, the friends of world peace, all those who love justice and hate iniquity, all those who are not cynically sceptical of such a thing as the conscience of civilization, "should bend their energies to make an enduring settlement in Ireland."

And the present unparalleled savagery of British rule in Ireland is making the task of settlement every day more difficult.

Yet without such settlement there will be no peace or good-will amongst nations—even the nations of the English speaking world.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE PEACE

In a previous article we referred to Maynard Keynes' remarkable book, summing up that part which gave incontrovertible facts and figures which showed how inextricably interwoven was Europe's economic and industrial life before the Great War. As an inevitable consequence Mr. Keynes, an expert on the subject and representative of the British Treasury at the Peace Conference, says the conditions imposed on Germany involve for all Europe industrial and economic ruin, the starvation of millions who lived by industry, and the engulfment of the starved and maddened millions in the chaos of Bolshevism.

Some items in the press have since given singular confirmation to the lowering menace to European civilization which it was the object of Mr. Keynes to point out and emphasize.

Mr. Frederick Palmer, the noted War correspondent, returning after a six months' tour through France, England, Italy, Poland, Germany, Austria and Hungary, is no less emphatic with regard to impending ruin of the work of ages of civilization. He says:

"There is food in Germany for the wealthy, but the workmen are having a wretched time to support their families because the dole given out by the Government is inadequate and there is no way in which they can earn money."

"The danger of Bolshevism lies chiefly in Germany. If the German workman is allowed by the Allies to starve, there is no doubt that he will turn to Bolshevism and join hands with the hordes who will swarm down from the Russian frontier to join him and tell him the earth is his."

Not only the industrial system but the transportation system of Europe, he tells us, has been completely demoralized and this adds to the confusion and hopelessness of the situation.

He continues: "All the little countries have started bureaus of their own, with the faintest idea of running a Government, and the result is hopeless chaos."

"The conditions in Austria and Hungary are indescribable. It is like a carcass left for the vultures to pick."

These are but glimpses of the picture he paints and his conclusion is: "To expect a permanent peace under such conditions is, in my mind, perfectly hopeless."

To return to Mr. Keynes' remarkable presentation of European conditions. Speaking of the work of American relief during the first six months of 1919 Mr. Keynes says: "Never was a nobler work of disinterested good-will carried through with more tenacity and sincerity and skill, and with less thanks either asked or received. The ungrateful Governments of Europe owe much more to the statesmanship and insight of Mr. Hoover and his band of American workers than they have yet appreciated or will ever acknowledge."

And speaking of the Paris Conference Mr. Keynes says: "Mr. Hoover was the only man who emerged from the ordeal with enhanced reputation."

With his eyes fixed steadily on the true and essential facts of the European situation he imparted into the Councils of Paris, when he took part in them, precisely that atmosphere of reality, knowledge, magnanimity, and disinterestedness which, if they had been found in other quarters also, would have given us the Good Peace."

Our author quotes Mr. Hoover as saying that "a rough estimate would indicate that the population of Europe is at least 100,000,000 greater than can be supported without imports, and must live by the production and distribution of exports."

Conditions were so bad even before the War ended that Mr. Keynes, referring to health conditions, says that "the imagination is dulled, and one seems almost guilty of sentimentality in quoting reports whose veracity is not disputed."

He quotes three: "In the last years of the War in Austria alone at least 35,000 people have died of tuberculosis, in Vienna alone 12,000. Today we have to deal with a number of at least 350,000 to 400,000 people who require treatment for tuberculosis. . . . As the result of malnutrition a bloodless generation is growing up with undeveloped muscles, undeveloped joints, and undeveloped brain."

The commission of Doctors appointed by the Medical Faculties of Holland, Sweden and Norway to examine the conditions in Germany reported as follows in the Swedish Press in April, 1919: "Tuberculosis especially in children, is increasing in an appalling way, and generally speaking is malignant. In the same way rickets is more serious and more widely prevalent. It is impossible to do anything for these diseases; there is no milk for the tuberculous and no cod liver oil for the tuberculous. Tuberculosis is assuming almost unprecedented aspects such as have been hitherto known only in exceptional cases. The whole body is attacked simultaneously; . . . it appears in the most terrible forms, such as glandular tuberculosis, which turns into purulent dissolution; . . . it is nearly always fatal."

A writer in the Vossische Zeitung, who accompanied the Hoover Mission, has the following: "I visited large country districts where 90% of the children were rickety and where children of three years were only beginning to walk. . . . Accompany me to a school. You think it is a kindergarten for the little ones. No, there are children of seven and eight years. Tiny faces with large gull eyes, overshadowed by huge, puffed, rickety foreheads, their small arms just skin and bone, and above the crooked legs with their dislocated joints, the swollen, pointed stomachs of the hunger edema."

Alas, for youth and innocence! What a crop of the sins of lust lies close ahead in a society whose popular amusements are thus corrupted, at the very time when amusement is more in demand than ever!

Last year 65,000 girls ran away from home in the State of New York alone. There has never been a time when the city stage was so thoroughly corrupt; and, by means of vandalism and the moving picture, its dirt is being carried to the eyes of the young in every nook and corner of North America.

A writer of the Association quotes an opinion given by a visitor to a New York theatre: "It was the vulgar incarnation of impurity spun about a display of hostility and underwear."

The bed-room play is the latest achievement; or rather it has reached

Germany cannot be trusted with even a modicum of prosperity, that while all our recent Allies are angels of light, all our recent enemies, Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, and the rest, are children of the devil, that year by year Germany must be kept impoverished and her children starved and crippled, and that she must be ringed round by enemies; then we shall reject all the proposals of this chapter, and particularly those which may assist Germany to regain a part of her former material prosperity and find a means of livelihood for the industrial population of her towns. But if this view of nations and of their relation to one another is taken by the democracies of Western Europe, and is financed by the United States, heaven help us all. If we aim deliberately at the impoverishment of Central Europe, vengeance, I dare predict, will not limp. Nothing can then delay very long that final civil war between the forces of Reaction and the despairing convulsions of Revolution, before which the horrors of the late German War will fade into nothing, and which will destroy, whoever is victor, the civilization and the progress of our generation."

One need not be an eminent economist, one need not be intimately conversant with European conditions, or competent to predict the results of selfish national greed and demonic national hatred, one need have merely the elementary instincts of a Christian to whom the savage torturing his conquered victim is revolting and loathsome, to read sympathetically and assent heartily to the conclusions of the eminent British economist whose work we are bringing to the attention of our readers.

But alas, to give expression to elementary Christian teaching nowadays is to expose oneself to the opprobrium of pro Germanism. The savage patriotism of non-combatants in the late War will have none of your effeminate Christianity to spoil their holy joy in victory—akin to that the redmen used to feel at the ceremony of torturing their captured victims.

GREAT FUN FOR THE DEVIL

BY THE OBSERVER

We have received copies of some leaflets issued by the Illinois Vigilance Association, of Chicago, one entitled "Theatres and Movies," another, "Church, School, Theatres and Movies." The object of these leaflets is, to arouse the public from its god-natured torpor on the subject of sensational amusements.

A correspondent is quoted who wrote on March 16th: "Today the Indianapolis papers are enthusiastic about 'The Follies,' now at English. One of the songs in the show is 'You can't shake your shimmy on tea.'"

"Shimmy" is an attempt to pronounce the French word "chemise," a shirt. "The Shimmy" is a form of the dance known as the fox trot, in which the dancers give the stomach-shaking wriggle. This coarse and vulgar performance is not unsuitably described by a word which suggests that to give it the full effect which the devil intended when he first suggested it, it ought to be danced in a shirt.

That audiences can be found to sit down and laugh at a song called, "You can't shake your shimmy on tea," is one of the signs of the times. Ladies, old and young, will it seem, permit the suggestion to be made to them that they can't shake their shirts effectively unless they have a few drinks of intoxicating liquor. That is—or to put it as plainly as the devil intends it—"If you want to give your stomach the right kind of shake or wiggle when you dance, you must have some booze; you can't do it on tea."

Alas, for youth and innocence! What a crop of the sins of lust lies close ahead in a society whose popular amusements are thus corrupted, at the very time when amusement is more in demand than ever!

Last year 65,000 girls ran away from home in the State of New York alone. There has never been a time when the city stage was so thoroughly corrupt; and, by means of vandalism and the moving picture, its dirt is being carried to the eyes of the young in every nook and corner of North America.

A writer of the Association quotes an opinion given by a visitor to a New York theatre: "It was the vulgar incarnation of impurity spun about a display of hostility and underwear."

The bed-room play is the latest achievement; or rather it has reached

its climax. For some years, beds and bed-rooms, and undressing for bed, have been introduced on the stage. The scenes were gradually made more suggestive; and finally, not long ago, they managed to show a man and woman in bed together on the stage; and they were not husband and wife. Of course they were at some pains to show that it happened accidentally; which did not make it less suggestive; but we surmise that they will soon cut out the accident. And, after that, there is just one step further that they can go. Will they take that step? We suppose they will. Is there any limit to the devil's desire to cause impure antics in the face of Christ Jesus?

"The worst of it is," says the Association, "that all this goes on by consent of the best people of our city life." Meaning, that if decent people under their influence the dirt would disappear.

But let us examine for a moment just what this title "decent people" means. Decent is as decent does. We may not be entitled to call ourselves "decent people" merely because we don't commit fornication and adultery. Decent people should maintain a standard of decency in public amusements which would cut out shirt dances and wriggle shows, and wholesale exposure of the person, and bed room scenes, and all that sort of vulgar and suggestive rubbish, the invention of the devil and calculated to keep up the number of arrivals in hell.

We claim to be decent; but are we? Have we a proper sensitiveness? Or, do we laugh at things that we cannot afford to laugh at?

Where do the bed room scenes, and the wriggle dancing, and the suggestors of shirt dances and booze, get their most effective support? They get it indirectly, not directly. They point to the "decent" people who through their theatres; and they say: "These people stand for it; so what are you talking about?"

What are we talking about? Talking about your corruption of the young for a few dirty dollar-bills. That's what we're talking about. And if you manage to get by with the bulk of your audience not because they approve of your doings, but because they don't wake up to their duty to get after you, do not imagine you are going to get away altogether without protest.

A SIMILAR incident is related as having happened in the island of Uist that same summer (1746). A man had been very zealous in burning some Catholic books and vestments. Soon afterwards his companion's gun went off accidentally, the ball lodging in the foot which had kicked the books and vestments into the fire. The wound thus inflicted could not be cured: the foot mortified and the man died shortly afterwards. We are not imputing any necessarily supernatural character to these incidents, but they have their own significance nevertheless.

AS ILLUSTRATIVE of the state of the Catholic religion in Scotland during the years following the collapse of the Stuart Rising, Bishop Geddes describes what he himself saw in the Enzie. Mr. John Godeman, the priest mentioned in connection with the vestment-burning incident, had taken the place of Mr. John Gordon who because of his part in raising men for Prince Charles Edward's army had to remain in hiding. Mr. Godeman said Mass in various places, commonly in barns, and always in the night time. "Towards the end of the week," relates Bishop Geddes, "he bespoke some barn that happened to be empty, in a place proper for the meeting of the people in the night, between the approaching Saturday and Sunday; and some trusty persons were sent to acquaint the heads of the Catholic families of this determination. On Saturday, when it was late at night, the Catholics convened at the appointed place; after midnight a sermon was made, Mass was said, and all endeavoured to get home before day break. These meetings were often very inconvenient, from the badness of the weather and the roads. . . . but all was borne with great cheerfulness. They seemed to be glad to have something to suffer for their God, and for the profession of His holy religion." The priest, it may be added, was always in motion, and went about clothed like a farmer. It was under such circumstances as these that the Catholic Faith was kept alive in Scotland during this trying period.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE POTATO BOYCOTT and the Overall Campaign if rightly directed and responded to by the people of Canada will go a long way towards solving the H. C. L. problem. The only regret is that they were not sooner initiated. Let everyone wear blue jeans and eschew the succulent tuber.

IT WILL be good news to many that Mr. John J. McGee's Reminiscences of his brother, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, mention of which was made in these columns some months ago, is now approaching completion and will in all probability be published during the present year. That it will be a book of surpassing interest goes without saying. D'Arcy McGee was an outstanding figure in Canadian political life during that most momentous period of our history which preceded Confederation, and his untimely death by an assassin's hand removed from the arena of affairs one who by reason of his pre-eminent talents and picturesque personality could not have failed to occupy a foremost place in the new Dominion.

D'ARCY MCGEE was not only a statesman of commanding ability, and easily the first orator in the old Parliament of Canada, but he was also by instinct a man of letters and a poet of a high order. As a contribution to Canadian literature and a stimulus to the intellectual life of the budding nation he, in 1868, published at Montreal a small volume of verse under the title "Canadian Ballads and Occasional Verses," which though issued in a considerable edition has since become very rare. Mr. McGee contemplates combining these poems with his Reminiscences, or re-issuing them separately, but has been unable up to the present time to find a copy. If any reader of the CATHOLIC RECORD has one in his possession, or can locate one, he will render a service to Canadian letters by communicating the fact to this office.

IN RE-READING Father William Forbes Leith's "Memoirs of Scottish Catholics During the Seventeenth

and Eighteenth Centuries," we have noted an incident which while illuminative of the times contains a lesson in perpetua for those inclined to make light of sacred things. After the battle of Culloden orders were issued by the Hanoverian authorities to demolish all the Catholic chapels in the country and to apprehend the priests. In consequence of this order a detachment of soldiers burned the chapel at Tulloch, in the Enzie, and also burned the altar, pulpit and seats of a neighboring parish, sparing the building in the latter, because of the danger in firing it or also burning the adjoining houses. On this occasion some sacerdotal vestments and books were seized and burned in the street, one, Lieutenant Munro, being particularly active in the proceedings. He put on the vestments in ridicule, and then threw them, together with the altar books, into the fire.

DURING THE afternoon of the same day a soldier who for some misdemeanour had been arrested by order of the commanding officer, Lord Charles Gordon, got hold of a gun and fired with the intention of killing Lord Charles, but missing him, the ball struck Munro, wounding him mortally. The remarkable incident of the affair is that Munro's blood actually ran among the ashes of the books and vestments. The fact was vouched for by several eye-witnesses, including the priest to whom the vestments belonged, Mr. John Godeman. The story is related by Bishop Geddes who seems to have had it first hand.

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GIVE COURSE IN GAEILIC

KNIGHTS ESTABLISH COURSE IN RESPONSE TO DEMAND

Former service men and women, who visited Ireland while with the American Expeditionary Forces have requested the Knights of Columbus to inaugurate a course in the Gaelic language in their reconstruction course. This the Knights of Columbus have decided to do.

William J. McGinley of New York, supreme secretary of the Knights of Columbus, made the announcement recently. "Besides teaching practical, earn-a-living courses," he said, "our aim is to provide cultural training, and Gaelic, the native language of the Irish, comes well within the meaning of that term, as it has a large and beautiful literature. All our courses are optional, and all instruction free. We were surprised