

The Catholic Record

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DR. CHOWN'S MARE'S NEST

The Rev. Dr. Chown is a man of intelligence and education; as Superintendent of the Methodist Church in Canada he must be sufficiently familiar with ecclesiastical procedure to enable him to understand more readily than others such procedure in the Catholic Church; yet we find him gravely warning the Canadian National Evangelical Conference and the Protestant Federation of Patriotic Women of Canada that he had found clear confirmation of their worst fears in a newspaper despatch that simply told of an appeal to higher authority from an ecclesiastical judgment.

Thus the Mail and Empire reports: "Dr. Chown went on to say that recently he read a despatch that the followers of De Valera had decided to appeal to the Vatican as the head of the State to pronounce the Provisional Government of Ireland as unconstitutional. That showed what Ireland had escaped by rejecting De Valera, and was an example of what would take place in any country where the supremacy of the Pope in temporal matters was admitted."

When, two weeks ago, we followed Dr. Chown patiently through his whole address and courteously showed where he was mistaken in his facts and quite unwarranted in his inferences, we had not before us the famous despatch with which Dr. Chown so satisfactorily proved his thesis. We have it now, or at any rate we have exactly what the despatch that alarmed Dr. Chown purported to give. Shortly before Dr. Chown's address in Toronto, a resolution was passed and published by the newly-formed Irish "Republican Government," of which De Valera is "President" and which includes several ex-members of Dail Eireann who were defeated at the last elections.

This resolution reads: "That we instruct President De Valera to make representations to the Vatican, formally and emphatically protesting, as head of the State, against the unwarrantable action of the Irish Hierarchy in presuming and pretending to pronounce an authoritative judgment upon a question of constitutional and political fact now at issue in Ireland, viz., whether the so-called Provisional (Partition) Parliament set up under threat of unjust war and by a coup d'etat, was the rightful Legislature and Government of the country or not, and in using the sanction of religion to enforce their own political views and compel acquiescence by the Irish Republicans in an usurpation that entails no less consequences than the partition of the ancient territory of our nation, the loss of its sovereignty and declared independence, and the imposition of a test oath that amounts to the disfranchisement of Republicans, who have regard for the sacred bond of an oath, and will not take it without meaning to keep it."

This resolution was cabled to Canada, and apparently that ominous word "Vatican" swept clear from Dr. Chown's head every trace of that training which, when he and the present writer were boys, formed so important a part of the school curriculum and was known as Analysis and Parsing.

It is quite clear both from the rules of syntax and common sense that it is De Valera as head of the State who is instructed to make representations to the Vatican protesting against the action of the Irish Bishops.

We doubt if there was a single man, woman or child in Ireland or in England, where the resolution was widely published, who read into it that the "Vatican" and not De Valera was here recognized or claimed as head of the State. Not a newspaper in Canada that published the despatch saw or suspected what became so clear to the perturbed brain of Dr. Chown, after "the Vatican" had gone to his head.

We do not believe that there is an intelligent boy in all the Methodist Sunday schools of Canada who would so misread the plain meaning of the Republican resolution.

But to make things quite clear to the anxious Superintendent of the Methodist Church let us glance at what the rebel Irish Republicans were asking Mr. De Valera, as head of the State, to protest against.

Everyone knows the sad state of affairs that has obtained in Ireland for the last seven or eight months.

A certain section of the people, numerically small, have shown themselves bitterly opposed to the Free State Government since its endorsement by the Irish people at the polls. They deny the validity of that endorsement; and they denounce the Anglo-Irish Treaty as equally invalid. They claim that the "Irish Republic" is still in being with its own lawful government of which De Valera is the head. They claim the right to use every means to wreck and destroy the Free State Government. They do not admit that they are rebels, but maintain that those who uphold the usurping Free State Government are traitors to their Republic. Hence the appalling series of outrages that threatened to reduce Ireland to ruin and anarchy.

Whether or not Dr. Chown thinks that the Irish Bishops should be dumb dogs in such circumstances we do not know. But in any case the Bishops of Ireland issued a joint Pastoral Letter dealing with the whole situation fully and fearlessly.

We commend the whole Pastoral Letter to the serious study of Dr. Chown and those who share his peculiar views. We can give here only a few extracts.

The Bishops write: "The claim is now made that a minority are entitled, when they think it right, to take arms and destroy the National Government. Last April, foreseeing the danger, we raised our voice in the most solemn manner against this disruptive and immoral principle. . . .

"From St. Paul downwards the Church has inculcated obedience to authority as a divine duty, as well as a social necessity, and has rebuffed unauthorized rebellion as sinful in itself, and destructive of social stability, as it manifestly is; for, if one section of the community has that right, so have other sections the same right, until we end in general anarchy. No Republican can evade this teaching by asserting that the legitimate authority in Ireland is not the present Dail or Provisional Government. There is no other, and cannot be, outside the body of the people. A Republic without popular recognition behind it is a contradiction in terms.

"Such being Divine Law, the guerilla warfare now being carried on by the irregulars is without moral sanction, and, therefore, the killing of National soldiers in the course of it is murder before God. The seizing of public and private property is robbery. The breaking of roads, bridges, and railways is criminal destruction; the invasion of homes and molestation of citizens a grievous crime.

"All those who, in contravention of this teaching, participate in such crimes, are guilty of grievous sins, and may not be absolved in Confession, nor admitted to Holy Communion if they persist in such evil courses."

It is from this authoritative pronouncement of the Irish Bishops that the Republicans urged De Valera to appeal to the Holy See. They base their appeal on the allegation that the whole question at issue is political and therefore beyond the jurisdiction of the Bishops.

This is the very antithesis of Dr. Chown's thesis.

Nor do the Republicans recognize the right of the Pope to decide this political question. Far from it. All he is asked to do is to decide whether or not the pronouncement of the Irish Bishops passes beyond their legitimate spiritual sphere and invades the political or civil order in which they concede to the Bishops no right to interfere. And the question has been taken up in Rome. The Vatican evidently recognizes that the Republicans have made out a *prima facie* case against the Bishops. Rome will hear both sides—

Rome always does observe this old-fashioned rule of justice and fair play; and we Catholics thank God for it. According to a despatch published during the past few days De Valera has placed his side of the case before the Roman authorities, who have in turn asked Cardinal Logue to present the case for the Irish Bishops. The decision of the Vatican will come in due course. In the meantime Dr. Chown might like to read this caustic analysis of the same document that he used to frighten the Protestant Patriotic Women. It is by a clear-headed Irishman on the other side of the Atlantic. Dealing with the Republican resolu-

tion he says: "Here is the same thing in plain English."

"We are the State by the Grace of God—and the Divine Right of guns, bombs, crooked logic and other weapons which God and nature have put into our hands. 'President De Valera is Head of the State, for he has its Almighty Brain.'"

"We instruct President De Valera to speak to the Vatican about the unwarrantable conduct of its Irish Servants. 'The Catholic Bishops of Ireland hold the wrong political opinions. They think the Irish voters are the State. They are using the sanction of religion to enforce their opinions—to stop us from enforcing our opinions by means of revolvers and dynamite.'"

"Their conduct is unwarrantable, because it has no warrant from us—no authority at all except their own degraded common sense and their wild idea that the Catholic Church ought to have some connection with the Ten Commandments of God."

"Their conduct is also unChristian, for they are trying to prevent us from keeping our sacred oath, which binds us to fight until we get a republic or until the Irish race is exterminated."

"We took this oath to please ourselves, and it is, therefore, the most sacred thing on earth—more sacred than the existence of the Irish people, more sacred than every feeling of pity and humanity."

"The majority of the people and the Bishops never took the oath, and think we have no right to exterminate them in order to keep it. But they are wrong, and we mean to prove it. We are going to knock them down, blow up their bridges, burn their houses, starve the children, and show by these arguments that nobody in Ireland has a right to think but ourselves."

"It is a holy and a wholesome thing for those ignorant people to have us to teach them the meaning of Freedom!"

"This is the hope of the 'Republicans.' We trust Dr. Chown has by this time got into his head who was meant by the head of the State; if so, is it too much to ask him that he correct the false impression made on others? We feel sure that the Superintendent of the Methodist Church in Canada will agree with us that by taking this honest course he will serve the best interests of Canadian patriotism as well as those higher things, which we trust Methodists and Catholics hold equally dear.—Truth, Justice, and Charity."

"THE PROSTRATE FORM OF GERMANY"

By THE OBSERVER

Mr. Lloyd George drew a touching picture the other day of France jumping on the prostrate form of Germany. The volatile little Welshman starts out this way:

"France has once more jumped on the prostrate form of Germany; and the saboteurs have come down with a thud that will sicken the heart of multitudes on both sides of the Atlantic whose friendship for France stood the losses and griefs of a four years' war."

Great Caesar! Is it possible we have made a mistake? Were we at war with France those four years and not with Germany. Were the "losses and griefs" of that terrible time a strain on our friendship with France. We had never thought of the matter in just that way. Perhaps Mr. Lloyd George had better speak for his own side of the Atlantic, if he has any authority to speak for anyone; which seems doubtful after the things the electors of Great Britain did to him in the recent elections.

But even with all allowances made for the Lloyd Georgian slush, which is of an unique quality, an utterance such as this is a phenomenon which the people of Canada are interested in, and one which will fill them with concern. Here is a so-called statesman who was at the head of the government of England for some years, including the closing years of the War. Listen to him talk now. Is there not here a matter for sober reflection for the people who lost sons, brothers or others in that dreadful War? Why, this man is a partisan advocate for Germany against France. He is not merely saying that France is acting unwisely and is trying impossibilities. That would be proper criticism, if he thinks so, whether he be right or wrong in his conclusions on that point. But he is crying out about saboteurs jumping on prostrate forms and in tones of emotional appeal trying to excite emotion against France.

Will the gentleman confine himself to the side of the Atlantic he thought, until he heard the recent election returns, that he knew all

about. I think I can assure him that nobody is getting sick at heart for Germany in this country up to this time. When we start worrying we may ask him to express our sentiments; but the chances are that we shall try to do it for ourselves; for Mr. Lloyd George is too much the stump orator to be a safe mouthpiece for the sober sentiments of the people of Canada. Up to the present he has been fairly representative of the public opinion of England on the question of German reparations; for English public opinion, at least so much of it as is affected by considerations of "Business is Business," has been very favorable to Germany in the reparations matter. But even the public opinion that answers to that influence is hardly ready to go into tears over "The prostrate form of Germany," however much it may feel concerned about the prostrate form of English trade.

The average Englishman, to do that race justice, is not much of a hypocrite. He is disposed rather to state boldly a selfish purpose and to back it up by force and a little fraud sometimes, but without much pretence of having higher aims than English interests. Mr. Lloyd George, with his emotional talk about the sickening thud of the saboteurs on the prostrate form of Germany, must be something of a puzzle to the average Englishman. The people of England today are, perhaps a majority of them, willing to see Germany get off without paying her indemnity not because they are at all touched by the prospect of Germany having to suffer a little of what she brought on the world, but merely because politicians and bankers and manufacturers have told them that business will be better for England if Germany is allowed to get strong and well again, with a whisper aside that France must not be allowed to become too powerful in Europe.

But the people of England, I imagine, will be rather inclined to laugh at Mr. Lloyd George's rhetorical appeal to take pity on the prostrate form of Germany. There are rather too many prostrate forms lying under the sod over there to permit of the bubbling up of much gush in Canadian hearts at least; and cheeks that are hardly yet dry of the tears shed for Canadians killed by Germans are not likely to be wet just yet with slobber tears for the people who killed them. We are not saying much about the Germans; and we are trying to do our Christian duty of forgiveness; but it is too soon to ask us to feel sick at heart over anything that may happen to them by reason of the War they started themselves.

When I read stuff like the above, I sometimes wonder how long before some Englishman who makes himself the mouthpiece of English trade and manufactures, will take courage to suggest that, after all, it was not Germany who was to blame for the War, but France or Russia. Does that seem a very preposterous idea that we shall yet see Englishmen exonerating Germany from blame for the War? Wait awhile and see. In the kaleidoscope of international politics and diplomacy, queer things happen; especially in international politics and diplomacy that are based on financial and commercial interests; so wait and see. There are some indications already that that phase of the selfishness and hypocrisy of nations is not so very far off.

I once raised a storm about my ears by suggesting as a possibility that the time might come when England and Germany would be Allies against France. Who will deny today that it is a possibility?

NOTES AND COMMENTS

WITH REGARD to the religion of Shakespeare, touched upon in these columns last week, the play of "King John" has been cited as "unmistakable evidence of his Protestant sentiments." A little consideration will show the hollowness of this claim.

MANY of Shakespeare's plays were not original with him but were built upon the work of other and inferior writers. As the guiding spirit of the Globe theatre many plays were submitted to him which as they stood were not adaptable to stage presentation. These Shakespeare took in hand and in many cases practically re-wrote, impressing upon them the mark of his mighty intellect. "King John" was one of these.

SHAKESPEARE took the idea of his "King John" from "The trouble-some Reign of King John," a play written to glorify Protestantism. He cut out the ribald stories about friars and nuns with which the latter abounds, and also the Tudor claim to spiritual supremacy—a claim not entirely original with Henry VIII. He expunged also John's contemptuous reply to the Pope's bull of excommunication, his jeers at the Pope personally, and his low jibes at everything sacred to Catholics. Cardinal Pandolph, who in the original is a mean hypocrite, becomes in Shakespeare's hands a wise and