

The Catholic Record

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“WHETHER ON THE SCAFFOLD HIGH”

“It is the moral strength of Belgium that furnished one of the greatest resources at the command of the Allies in the late War.”

“It is the lesson of no compromise with brute force.”—(From ex-Justice Charles Evans Hughes’ address of welcome to Cardinal Mercier.)

“In ages yet to come the historian, seeing things in their proper perspective, will recognize, what Justice Hughes here points out, that the triumph of the moral and spiritual force of little Belgium over the all-conquering brute force of arrogant Prussia was one of the greatest achievements of the World War in contributing to progress and to the establishment in the world of justice.”

“The world will then have learned the limitations of brute force: the folly of pitting it against the moral force of right, against the never-dying principles of truth, or against the invincible resistance of the principles of justice.”

“And the historian of that far-off future age will recognize in Ireland’s indomitable determination to make no compromise with brute force a contribution to progress and to the establishment of justice in the world, no less heroic, no less important than that of Belgium.”

“Nor do we have to wait for the impartial and dispassionate judgment of future history; already, despite the stupendous problems confronting every nation, the world’s sympathy goes out to heroic Ireland, for the world’s conscience is keenly alive to the fact that in this unequal struggle are involved the ideals proclaimed during the War, fundamental principles of international justice, and the hope, not yet extinguished, that Right may reign in place of the old brute force of Might.”

and the Sinn Fein leaders, declared that the Cabinet had deliberately come to the conclusion that its policy toward Ireland was ‘right and justified.’ Then, quoting the impassive verba of the erstwhile preacher of the Gospel of Anarchy, he tells us Bonar Law said:

“It is our duty to make it plain that Britain has counted the cost and is prepared to the utmost to insure that decent living conditions are restored.”

All of which, he it remembered, referred to the questions raised as to the Mountjoy hunger strike.

The discussion was animated and we commend it to those who can see no distinction between England and the present English government.

Here are some hints of the spirit of the debate and evidence that there are Britons whose sense of justice is outraged by Government action:

T. P. O’Connor, Lord Robert Cecil, Neil McLean, F. C. Ackland and Commander Kenworthy were participants in the debate, which reached a climax when Commander Kenworthy, Liberal, shouted: “Why not make Ireland a Republic? If it costs so much in trouble and bloodshed, is it worth it?”

Lord Robert Cecil interrupted to ask if Labor favored an Irish Republic.

Neil McLean, Labor Whip, for the first time, on behalf of British Labor replied that he did.

During the day’s debate Mr. Clynes, pointing out the danger of the Labor disturbances in Ireland spreading to England, urged that the arrested men be either tried or subjected to special treatment.

And we can assure The Chronicle that on this continent it is not after they are dead that we think we have a right to know why they had been imprisoned.

The venerable Archbishop Walsh lives in Dublin; he is in a position to know whereof he speaks. Can any honest man have an honest doubt that the anguished prelate speaks what he knows to be the truth?

When Bonar Law had apparently issued the ultimatum of Brute Force, Archbishop Walsh said:

“As far as I can see, we are face to face with the near prospect of an appalling catastrophe. I have the greatest possible apprehension of the consequences of the present obstinately rigid adherence to the maintenance of present rules. It is appalling to think of what we may be on the verge of in Ireland. It is all the result of the abominable obstinacy of the Government here in treating men as criminals who, so far from having been convicted of any crime, have never been put on trial or never been told what they are charged with.”

The Government treats as criminals “men who so far from having been convicted of any crime, have never been put on trial, nor ever been told what they are charged with.”

That is the naked, damning and damnable fact on which the whole question rests.

That is the issue which justifies, annobles, sanctifies the heroic moral and spiritual resistance of the Mountjoy prisoners.

“There must be no compromise with brute force.” Seven hundred years ago the barons of England, led by Cardinal Stephen Langton, wrested from the tyrant John the Great the Charter of English liberties.

Seven hundred years hence the struggle of Ireland, of which the Mountjoy hunger strike is a symbol and a part, will be regarded as a more heroic and not less important contribution to the establishment of justice and liberty.

Washington, April 14.—A resolution requesting the Secretary of State, with the approval of the president, to cause representations to be made to the British Government for the immediate trial of Irish citizens arrested and locked up because of their fight “in behalf of freedom and independence” was introduced today by Representative Tague, Democrat, Massachusetts.

The resolution sets forth that a considerable number of Irishmen had been arrested as political offenders, but they were entitled to arraignment and trial, “pending arraignment to be afforded that treatment which the principles of the law of nations accord to those arrested for political crimes as distinguished from felonies.”

For the hunger strikers suffering, dying, the hearts of lovers of Ireland and lovers of liberty thrilled in anguish but understanding sympathy.

To the hunger strikers triumphant goes out universal congratulation and acclaim.

But though a glorious victory, we know too well that it is but a battle in a long war.

Henceforth, however, others who may be called on to show the same high courage and indomitable spirit will realize more fully and more keenly than ever that in the hearts and memories of all succeeding generations they will be regarded as having risked or laid down their lives for a sacred cause no less truly than if they fell on the field of battle.

“Whether on the scaffold high or on battlefield we die. Sure what matter when for Ireland dear we fall.”

May the knowledge that all Irish hearts understand this sentiment sustain all Irishmen in the motherland in their firm resolve to make no compromise with brute force.

NEGLECTED AND DEPENDENT CHILDREN The reports for 1916 and 1917 of the Superintendent, Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario have recently been issued.

The law is definite and fair in directing that Protestant children shall be placed in Protestant homes and Roman Catholic children shall be placed in Roman Catholic homes.

Of the sixty-two Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario one is Catholic, located in Toronto, with no jurisdiction outside the city; and one, also in Toronto, is limited to dealing with Protestant children.

The other sixty Societies deal with both Catholic and Protestant children, and there appears to be a most unfortunate misunderstanding on the part of many Catholics in that they think these Societies are Protestant.

In a few Societies throughout the Province, Catholics are in some of the chief offices; in a few other Societies Catholics take a little interest in this work, but in most districts they take none.

All the Agents of the Children’s Aid Societies, who have the active management of the work and deal with the children, are non-Catholic, and in the districts where Catholics take no interest; in this work naturally there are mistakes made in dealing with the Catholic children. It can be easily understood that in the cases of child neglect on the part of Catholic parents these parents are not good Catholics, and it is often difficult to decide in which religious category the children should be placed.

There is a similar difficulty when one parent is Catholic and one is Protestant. When these difficulties arise and no Catholic is taking an interest in the work, it is rather too much to expect that a non-Catholic will as carefully guard the interests of the Catholic side of the case as he will those of the non-Catholic side.

It can be acknowledged and understood that a man with ordinary religious convictions is usually a member of the Catholic Church or of a non-Catholic Church, and in private life, believing as he does, he wishes that as many as possible be given the same privilege which he enjoys.

With the public official, who is charged with the administration of a law which enters into such intimate relations with people’s religious feelings and differences as does the Children’s Protection Act, the case is different. The ideal official for this work is one who has an intelligent knowledge and sympathetic understanding of the submerged and derelicts of humanity, and a great zeal that every child be given a fair chance to develop into an honest, God-fearing citizen.

Accompanying this he should have an intelligent knowledge and sympathetic understanding of the differences in religion which divide the people, and a determination that justice shall be done in accordance with the law. Probably there are not many, either Catholic or Protestant, who have all these qualifications and who would be willing to take service in a Children’s Aid Society as a life work, therefore when they are dealing with differences in religion they should have the benefit of counsel from both sides affected.

It may also be useful to mention the fact that there is a Catholic official under the Act to whom Catholics desirous of information may reasonably address themselves—William O’Connor, 65 Tranby Ave., Toronto.

Gaelic in Nova Scotia

BY THE OBSERVER

There has always been a good deal of interest taken in Canada, in the Scottish Gaelic language, and a new stirring of such interest has recently become noticeable in Nova Scotia, where a large number of Scottish residents are now petitioning the Government to give Gaelic a place in the Public Schools, and where a Chair of Gaelic in St. Francis Xavier’s University, at Antigonish, has been freely discussed.

One foresees at once that this is a question that will not be readily disposed of in the negative; and that any public man who unwisely hesitates is likely to be lost. There seems to be no reason why a negative should be even seriously considered; and it probably will not be seriously considered; and public men are not fond of pretending that they are immovable objects and of letting an irresistible force try experiments in hitting them.

The Scot is pretty nearly an irresistible force when he makes up his mind that things shall be thus or so. That is the way he has made such a broad, deep and permanent mark on every country where he has settled; and he has settled in most countries, and with advantage to the State and to society in all cases.

If the Scot decides that Gaelic is to be taught in the Public Schools of Canada, taught it will be; there is no need to speculate as to whether it will or will not be done, for done it will be.

And why not? Well, perhaps we had better first inquire into the why? “The principle of nationalities” has been much discussed within the past few years; and even those who do not like it much, are beginning to see that it has nine times as many lives as a cat, and has several of them to live yet. The revival of nationality in the Balkans and in Poland is so perfectly natural as to surprise no one; for there, as in Ireland, it has been nursed in sad and bruised hearts and has fed deep on the sorrows of the people.

But the revival of nationality in Scotland has surprised many, especially those who had never studied the marvelous preservative of nationality in Wales.

However, to account for it is not the question. It is there; and the Gaelic revival, which reached its highest point of progress, up to the present, in 1918 is one of the living evidences of it. We have no doubt that the present Gaelic movement in Nova Scotia is due in large part to the progress made in the similar movement in Scotland. Therefore, a few words about that movement in Scotland seem to be in place.

By the census returns, it appears that nearly a quarter of a million persons in Scotland speak Gaelic, and that about twenty thousand cannot speak English. That is rather an astonishing situation, considering that Gaelic was very much neglected as a subject of study up to, say, twenty years ago, and that its progress in revival has not been rapid until an even later date. It is not so astonishing as the figures concerning Welsh in Wales, but it is astonishing all the same.

But, long before 1918, the Gaelic movement had touched the schools of Gaelic-speaking districts in the Highlands, and had done a good deal to improve and extend the teaching of the ancient language.

The Gaelic revival began amongst college men, professors and professional men; notably clergymen. By means of Gaelic literary associations, and such associations as the London Invernessire Association, the leading men of Scotland were gradually drawn into the movement; and it is a curious fact that Scotsmen resident in London did much of the work by which Gaelic has been made a live issue in the educational field. The first steps to revive Gaelic as a subject of general education and not of mere literary and historical interest, were taken in that part of the educational field which is dealt with by the High Schools, colleges and universities. The movement achieved in that direction some notable successes, and has slowly worked its way back to the common schools.

As the movement went on, the front was widened; and in 1918, when the Gaelic Clause was proposed and debated in the House of Commons when the Education Act was being passed, the claims of Gaelic were put not as a mere subject of literary interest, but put on the ground that the man who knows two languages is better equipped than the man who knows only one, and that, for Scotsmen, the most natural and the most useful, second language to learn, was Gaelic.

Apathy and opposition were manifested, of course. Many Scots saw little good in reviving Gaelic; and there were not wanting some who thought they saw ruin to English in that revival. But the apathy and the opposition are pretty well gone now; and Gaelic is coming rapidly into its natural and rightful place; not as superseding or displacing English; but as a second language and one in which the traditions and the sentiments of the Scot, and the peculiar things which differentiate one race from another and constitute what we call nationality, find natural expression.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE DEATH is announced of Most Rev. John Baptist Crozier, “Archbishop of Armagh” and “Primate of all Ireland” in the “Church of Ireland.” Gladstone’s Disestablishment bill of 1869 made of this “Church of Ireland” an empty shell, but the curious anomaly of a “Primate” without a flock still survives.

SINCE THE Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States has lifted the ban from dancing, card-playing and theatre-going, a little of its superfluous energy might now wish advantage be directed against divorce. Dancing, card-playing and theatre-going are evils only in their abuse; divorce on the other hand, at least as understood and practiced in the American Republic, is an unmitigated evil, which is eating like a cancer worm into the very heart of civilization and threatens the destruction of the family itself. Here surely is a field of action for the Methodist Church and for every other organization whose professed mission is the welfare of the race. Hitherto the Catholic Church has in this cause stood alone. Her face is set like adamant against everything that assails the sanctity of the home, and in this matter of divorce she will welcome the co-operation of all whose sympathies are with that high ideal.

THE ANGLICAN Church is nothing if not progressive. It is now suggested, apparently seriously, that it would be but keeping abreast of the times to have “women confessors.” At least, the subject is to be discussed at the Lambeth Conference, this summer. That with the thirty-nine articles still holding their place, as the official compendium of Anglican doctrine and discipline, the subject of Confession should be discussed at all is, as Lord Dunderbury used to say, “one of those things no fellow can find out.” But as to the women—why not turn the whole thing over to the Y. W. C. T. U.? The result could not fail to be at least interesting.

THE LATEST claim made in the much-abused name of Science is that of positively determining by means of X-rays, the character, disposition, tastes and special traits of any individual and of thus solving the problem of selection in regard to matrimony. It is the diaphragm