

The Catholic Record

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SELF-DETERMINATION

Chancellor von Hertling in his reply to President Wilson made this very pertinent remark with regard to the famous principle of national self-determination:

"When England talks of peoples' rights to self-determination she does not think of applying the principle to Ireland, Egypt or India."

That is a remark that is being made in many lands and in many tongues. The failure to make practice square with principle is responsible for much of the manning unrest even amongst the people of England; they are beginning to make it quite clear that if this ghastly struggle is prolonged it must be not for statements of abstract principles of democracy but for their concrete application.

The Toronto Daily News in a particularly savage article takes up the very recent, but already out-of-date, argument of the English political classes, now fast losing their grip on England as well as on Ireland, who have always been bitterly and unscrupulously hostile to Ireland's right to national self-determination.

The News—"Chancellor von Hertling's remark that Great Britain does not recognize the principle of self-determination in Ireland is assuredly not justified by the course of English politics."

The London Daily Chronicle, one of the leading journals of England, referring to the rock of self-contradiction on which British propaganda in the United States is wrecked, points out that a more excellent and more effective way would be "to give an example of self-determination, which we preach to other peoples, by granting self-government to Ireland. Until we do British propaganda in America will be largely wasteful or worse."

The London Chronicle presumably is even better acquainted with "the course of English politics" than the Toronto News; the Chronicle knows, too, how shamelessly the dice were loaded against Ireland in the political game, and does not feel so free as the News to use such soporifics as would provoke the ridicule of English readers.

The News—"Difficulties have arisen not much because of the sentiment of England as because of the division of counsels in Ireland itself. The north refused to be ruled by a southern majority, and the south refused to consider the right of the north to its opinions."

If the minority in North East Ulster is to be maintained by England in its claim to exercise an absolute veto over the political aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people then the principle of self-determination so far as Ireland is concerned becomes an absolute farce, and the quiet scorn of the German Chancellor is justified. With much greater reason might Quebec claim the right to override the decision of the other eight provinces of Canada in matters of national concern. Quebec has been unfortunate in some of its political Gamaliels but has never been bedevilled for such sordidly selfish political ends as has poor North East Ulster.

The News—"The fact that the Belfast region has been uniformly ardent in its attachment to British institutions, while from time to time the south has ranged from cattle driving to assassination and open rebellion, has made the problem almost insoluble."

We shall let an Ulster Protestant answer this outworn calumny which condenses much misinformation about Ireland into a single sentence. St. John G. Irvine in "Sir Edward

Carson and the Ulster Movement" writes:

"At the risk of being tedious and vainly repetitious, I wish to impress upon the mind of the English reader this fact, that Ulstermen are Irish men; and that they dislike intensely any suggestion that they are aliens in a hostile land. It is important, too, that the English reader should know that Ulstermen have been as rebellious, more dangerously rebellious, against the English, as the 'Irish' have been."

With regard to "cattle-driving" The News, as usual where Ireland is concerned, gives us another instance of picking up its misinformation on Irish affairs from the by-wash of exploded calumnies. Mr. Irvine wrote of such misinformed zealots before the era of increased production had opened their eyes to the fact that the interests of the Empire and the interests of the "cattle-drivers" were one:

"The reader of Unionist journals might easily imagine, from the tone of the references to 'cattle-driving,' that Irish Nationalists take an inhuman delight in torturing cows simply for the sake of torturing them. It is a fact that thousands of 'men in the street' in England literally do not know that 'cattle-driving' is the Irish agricultural equivalent of strikes, that it is the means employed by the workless farm laborer to express his discontent at the conversion of tilled lands into grasslands. The 'cattle-drivers' may or may not be cruel to the beasts they drive. It is probable that some of them are, and it is equally probable that some of them are not. The practice is reprehensible, but it is not any more reprehensible than the acts of sabotage and personal violence with which workmen in Belfast have from time to time conducted strikes. I am not here defending or denouncing strikes, though in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I would say that the strikers are in the right: I am merely asking the reader to note that conduct which, in a Belfast workman, is described as 'industrial disorder' is, in agricultural laborers in Nationalist districts, described as 'crime.' The Unionist journals, moreover, always give their readers the impression that 'cattle-driving' is conducted at the expense of Protestants, whereas it is mainly conducted at the expense of Catholics. The grievance of the workless laborer is not that the large grazier is a Protestant or a Catholic; it is that fewer men are employed on grasslands and cattle ranches than are employed on lands under tillage."

"I have chosen this instance of 'cattle-driving' as an example of the method that is employed by politicians and journalists to misrepresent facts and distort truth."

The News—"Without an agreement on the part of the Irish people Home Rule was an impossibility."

Germany with regard to Prussian Poland or Alsace-Lorraine, Austria-Hungary with regard to any one of her subject nationalities could make out quite as good a case as this. But if the Central Powers proclaimed as one of their chief objects in the War the self-determination of peoples, government only by and with the consent of the governed, and sought to evade its application by any such subterfuge as the lack of absolute unanimity on the part of the people concerned, the world would ring with scornful denunciation of such shifty and transparently dishonest evasion.

The News in its anxiety to make a case against Sinn Fein absolutely justifies von Hertling and the German occupation of the conquered Russian provinces.

The German Chancellor says: "If further military operations in other regions have taken place, the same applies to them. They in no way aim at conquest. They are solely taking place at the urgent appeals and representations of the populations for protection against atrocities and devastation by red guards and other bands. They have, therefore, been undertaken in the name of humanity. They are measures of assistance, and have no other character. It is a question of creating peace and order in the interest of peaceable populations."

The News supplies a paragraph that von Hertling might have inserted right here in his speech:

"There is a tyranny worse than that of Cromwell or any other absolutist or autocrat. Russia has experienced its heavy hand—the tyranny of anarchy. Democratic government should be the happy mean. The principle of self-determination presupposes that anarchy has been throttled and that the people are ready for stable administration based on popular suffrage."

And then The News adds: "Sinn Feiners, like burglars and assassins, have no status before the nations."

Now what is the crime that classes Sinn Feiners with burglars and assassins? Simply that these Irishmen claim for Ireland what the Poles claim for Poland, what the Belgians claim for Belgium, what the Serbs demand for Serbia—national independence. It may be unwise, we think it is in Ireland's case. But the

spirit exhibited by The News makes it quite natural. It was just this intolerant and impenitent Prussian spirit that made Sinn Fein inevitable.

National sentiment and national memory must be taken into account in judging Ireland as well as other countries. Hear what an honest English Protestant writes of some of the things which go to form Irish national sentiment and which are ever present in the Irish national memory:

"The march of Pitt's policy went on: and the chasm between light and darkness deepened. Order was restored; and wherever order spread, there spread anarchy more awful than the sun has ever looked on. Torture came out of the crypts of the Inquisition and walked in the sunlight of the streets and fields. A village vicar was slain with inconceivable stripes, and his corpse set on fire with frightful jests about a roasted priest. Rape between a mode of government. The violation of virgins became a standing order of police."

"Telling the truth about Ireland is not very pleasant to a patriotic Englishman; but it is very patriotic. It is the truth and nothing but the truth which I have but touched on in the last chapter."

"The truth about Ireland is simply this: that the relations between England and Ireland are the relations between two men who have to travel together, one of whom tried to stab the other at the last stopping place or to poison the other at the last inn."

Now this is not in the least an exaggerated parable of the position of England towards Ireland, not only in '98 but far back from the treason that broke the Treaty of Limerick and far onwards through the Great Famine and after. . . . The British Prime Minister publicly refused to stop the Famine by the use of English ships. The British Prime Minister positively spread the Famine, by making the half starved populations of Ireland pay for the starved ones. The common verdict of a coroner's jury upon some emaciated wretch was 'Wilful murder by Lord John Russell'; and that verdict was not only the verdict of Irish public opinion, but is the verdict of history. But there were those in influential positions in England who were not content with publicly approving the act; they publicly proclaimed the motive. The Times, which had then a national authority and respectability which gave its words a weight unknown in modern journalism, openly exulted in the prospect of a Golden Age when the kind of Irishmen native to Ireland would be as 'rare on the banks of the Liffey as a red man on the banks of the Manhattan.' The coercion was not imposed that the people might live quietly, but that the people might die quietly. And then we sit in an owlish innocence of our sin, and debate whether the Irish might conceivably succeed in saving Ireland. We, as a matter of fact, have not even failed to save Ireland. We have simply failed to destroy her."

If the editorial writer in The News knew anything at all about Irish history he would be less incoherent in tone and epithet in dealing with a question of vital interest to Ireland, it is true, but one which also vitally affects the good name, the stability, even the very existence of the British Empire. We have hit on the highest authority that the traditional stupidities and malignities of English misgovernment in Ireland have continued even during the period of the War. Wise statesmanship on the part of men prominent in English public life sided by good will on the part of the overwhelming majority of the English people is seeking to solve a problem of supreme Imperial interest. The spirit displayed by The Daily News is a far greater obstacle than Sinn Fein to a statesmanlike solution, is far more dangerous and disloyal than Sinn Fein to the highest interests of the British Empire.

THE NEW IRISH SPIRIT

In wholesome contrast to the spirit of the Toronto Daily News as examined in the foregoing article is the spirit which animates George Russell (A. E.) an Ulster Protestant and member of the Irish Convention. In a recent number of the Irish Times he publishes an article of which we give the concluding paragraphs:

"We are slowly realizing the vigor of the modern Irish character just becoming self-conscious of itself. I had met many men who were in the enterprise of Easter week and listened to their speech, but they had to prove their spirit to myself and others by more than words. I listened with that half-cynical feeling which is customary with us when men advocate a cause with which we are temperamentally sympathetic, but about whose realization we are hopeless. I could not gauge the strength of the new spirit, for words do not by themselves convey the quality of power in men; and even when the reverberations from Easter week were echoing everywhere in Ireland, for a time I, and many others, thought and felt about those who

remember the unprecedented scene in the House of Commons and the effect throughout the most distant parts of the British Empire?"

Sir Edward Grey in the course of his speech said: "The one bright spot in the whole of the terrible situation is Ireland. The general feeling throughout Ireland, and I would like this to be clearly understood abroad, does not make the Irish situation a consideration which we feel we have now to take into account."

And the great Irish Leader who has just passed away after referring to Grattan's Volunteers said: "Today there are in Ireland two large bodies of Volunteers. One of them sprang into existence in the North. Another has sprung into existence in the South. I say to the Government that they may tomorrow withdraw everyone of the troops in Ireland. I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended from foreign invasion by her armed sons, and for this purpose armed Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with the Protestant Ulstermen in the North."

No speech was ever received with greater enthusiasm and emotion in the British House of Commons. And in Ireland events showed that Redmond was indeed the leader with the strength of all the land like a falchion in his hand. Carsonism was forgotten; the Scottish Borderers, blood-stained from the outrage of Bachelor's Walk, were cheered on their way to France by the Dublin people. Young Irishmen flocked to the colors.

Alas, a new and disastrous chapter soon opened.

"I have worked," wrote T. P. O'Connor, referring to the changed conditions, "for the reconciliation of the people of England and Ireland for more than half a century; I never had expected in my most sanguine moments such a transformation of Irish feeling till half a century after I had ceased to breathe."

"Need I recapitulate the ghastly story of how all this splendid and unexpected state of feeling was gradually frittered away and then transformed into the very opposite feeling? The story was told in a recent debate in the House of Commons by Mr. Redmond and other Irish speakers. The refusal to allow the volunteers who then were overwhelmingly in sympathy with the policy of Mr. Redmond, to be trained and equipped; so that today men are lying in the graves in Kilmaham who might be fighting in the trenches; the obstacles placed in the way of raising Irish Nationalist brigades; the refusal to allow Irish Nationalists to command Irish Nationalist regiments—their places taken from the ranks of their political and religious opponents; the steps permitted in Ireland which were deliberately intended not to encourage but to destroy recruiting; all the long series of blunders and deliberate betrayal of the interests of the Empire in its hour of deadliest peril in the interests and animosities of faction—need I recapitulate the whole story when it was all summed up in those resounding and imperishable words in which Mr. Lloyd George described it—'with the ineptitudes and malignities' of the War Office."

We must, of course, remember that ascendancy and oligarchy, more concerned with undemocratic class privilege, and with the welfare of the nation, were playing a desperate game; but the game is played out. The new franchise gives the finishing stroke to their rotten politics. To a parliament really representative of the people John Redmond's loyalty, fidelity, honesty and statesmanship will long shine out in contrast with the reckless selfishness, dishonesty and evasion of the English ruling class over which the English people, with the indispensable aid of their Irish allies, have now achieved final democratic victory.

In the light of events of the last few years of Anglo-Irish history there is something pathetic, something strong and fearless too, in the stern rebuke pronounced a year ago by the great Irish leader who has just passed from the scene of human strife; and the strength and fearlessness and truth of his words will long outlive their pathos:

"Any British statesman who teaches once again the Irish people the lesson that a National Leader who endeavors to combine loyalty to Ireland's rights with loyalty to the Empire is certain to be let down and betrayed by this course is guilty of treason, not merely to the liberties of Ireland, but to the unity, strength and best interests of the Empire. That is the course which the Irish people will recognize as having been taken by you."

"KNOWING OUR LEADERS" Without taking it too literally, and changing what must be changed to give it a Canadian application, Father John Talbot Smith's animadversions

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(given on page 8) may stimulate some useful thought amongst Canadians. The "Jack is as good as his master and a darned sight better" philosophy may have had a certain amount of usefulness in its time; but if the rank and file do not give due weight and influence to the judgment of educated and well balanced Catholics, if they do not welcome and seek out such judgment on matters of common concern and interest, Catholics will be a leaderless crowd instead of an important body governed by its own education and intelligence. Prescinding altogether from politics, at least where leadership is subservient to party, we might ask ourselves if we are not notably deficient in the matter we are considering. In societies exclusively Catholic, where consequently there is no outside interference with free choice, how often will the officers be found to represent fairly the intelligence, the education, the sound judgment, the capacity for real leadership in anything worth while, of the Catholic population of the community?

It may be that the fault is not entirely with the vaulting ambition of the ignorant and incapable; it may be that those fitted by education, by natural endowments, by achievement and position hold themselves aloof from their less fortunate coreligionists and are, therefore, unavailable even with the best of good will and good sense on the part of the latter. It may be—and we think it is—that the actual condition is fairly attributable to both of these unfortunate and regrettable causes. In any case it is not worth thinking over? Is it not time that good sense, good will and fraternal cooperation should find scope at least in Catholic societies? Other things complained of by Father Smith would then settle themselves.

THE DAYS OF YORE A gentleman recently put to us the question: "Was Ireland ever conquered?" An answer to this might be of special interest to our readers on the eve of Ireland's religious and national feast; and at a time when all true friends of the Green Isle are hoping to see the realization of that country's ideals, either in that absolute self-determination that is being promised to small nationalities, or in at least a generous measure of autonomy.

In the record of history, the year 1172 is put down as the date of the Conquest of Ireland by Henry II. It came about thiswise. On the advice, some claim, of St. Bernard, whose zealous watchfulness extended to the whole Western Church, and who had been informed by his friend St. Malachy, who died in his arms at Clairvaux, of the evils existing in Ireland, and at the solicitation of one John of Salisbury, an Englishman, who had paid a long visit to his fellow countryman who was then ruling from Peter's chair as Adrian IV., the Pontiff by a letter of investiture, and by a Bull known as "Laudabiliter," made a donation of Ireland to the English king, that the latter might bring about peace and a religious reformation in the country. The Pope certainly had the power to do this, for the Roman Pontiffs, since the days of Constantine, held the position of over-lords of the islands of Western Europe. The genuineness of the documents referred to was, however, questioned at the time, and has been questioned in our day by such an eminent scholar as the late Cardinal Moran.

There is no doubt that the long and bloody wars with the Danes had left Ireland in a very disorganized condition. There was much domestic strife, and a great deal of laxity in the religious life of the country. On the other hand it was a period when two of Ireland's canonized saints occupied episcopal sees, St. Malachy being Primate of Armagh and St. Lawrence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin. It was a strange anomaly that the licentious Plantagenet, the despoiler of the English Church and the murderer of St. Thomas à Becket, should have been sent at such a time to reform the country. It was another strange coincidence that the enemy entered Dublin through the trenchery of McMerrough of Leinster, who had scandalized the country by dishonoring the marriage tie and who died "unhousel'd, unapponed, unanelid." In the little Irish army, that laid siege to the city held by Strongbow and his Norman knights, were two men both clad in armor who represented the nationality of Ireland; Roderick O'Connor, the last of the Ard-Rights or High Kings who ruled

the country under the old Brehon laws, and who died a monk in the monastery of Clonmacnoise, and St. Lawrence O'Toole, the last canonized saint of Ireland who gave the command to draw the sword against the invader.

It is significant that Roderick O'Connor, though defeated by Strongbow, still retained the title of king and was buried with royal honors. Furthermore, neither Henry II. nor any of his successors down to the time of the Reformation ever styled themselves "Kings of Ireland." The moat they laid claim to was the exercise of suzerainty over the island.

During the period from 1172 to 1541 the Norman-Irish barons and native chiefs ruled the country, or at least each one his portion of it. The only ruler to attain to anything like universal sway was the "Red Earl" of Ulster. There is no mention during this time of a king of Ireland except "King Bruce," the brother of the hero of Bannockburn, who was proclaimed king at Dundalk and who fell at the battle of Fangharda while leading the Scotch-Irish forces against the Norman invaders. Thus did the Scotch show their gratitude for the sympathy and assistance they received from Ireland in their own struggle for freedom. Again at the end of that period, in the year 1540, we find the Irish offering the crown to James V. of Scotland. He held for a short time the title of "Dominus Hibernie," "Lord of Ireland." But the defeat of his forces at Solway Moss broke his ambitious spirit, and he died at the age of thirty-three, on the very day on which his daughter Mary Queen of Scots was born. This, no doubt, accounts for the loving veneration in which the Irish people have ever held the memory of that ill-fated queen.

Nothing now prevented Henry VIII. from establishing his supremacy in Ireland. But that supremacy was not established by conquest but by the referendum vote of that motley parliament that met in Dublin in 1541. By a bill that passed its three readings in one sitting the title of "King of Ireland" was bestowed upon Henry and his heirs, and thus was the royalty of Ireland formally relinquished. "The Emerald Gem of the western world was set in the crown of a stranger."

Perhaps it was this incident so fraught with ills to the Irish race that an eminent churchman of our day had in mind when he warned his people not to hand over their liberties to the tender mercies of any government.

THE GLEANER

NOTES AND COMMENTS

PROPOS THE current discussion as to the position of the Pope in regard to the War, the editorial answer of the Glasgow Evening Times to the irritable remonstrance of a correspondent is worth noting. It shows that all the men of sense and reason are not dead yet.

"WHY SHOULD A Scots paper," wrote this querulous individual, "even consider any reference to what the Pope says or attempts? I believe this nation got rid of him and his influence about 400 years ago." "The newspaper which ignored the existence of the Pope on the somewhat foolish grounds put forward by our correspondent, would itself soon cease to exist, and would deserve to do so," was the judicious rejoinder.

IN DISCUSSING the language and religion question in Canada, more especially as regards the relationship of Quebec to the other Provinces, The Presbyterian and Westminster said in a recent issue: "We Canadians are trying a new experiment in nation building, and there is room for wide differences of opinion as to the ultimate form and place of our Dominion. Above all we should abstain from the appeals to prejudice, and the vulgar abuse which deface the pages of certain newspapers both in Ontario and Quebec."

THIS is a wise and equitable saying. When, however, elsewhere in the same issue of our contemporary we read that as a result of "the Roman Catholic Church having absolute control for one hundred and twenty-seven years," "the people were kept in ignorance and servitude," and that the "spiritual reign of darkness prevailed over the whole of Lower Canada," which became, in consequence, the "most