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LONDON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1914

AN ECHO OF THE "CONGO
ATROCITIES"

Preaching in the Earlscourt Baptist Church yesterday, Rev. R. V. Bingham, secretary of the Sudan Interior Mission, said that one aspect of the invasion of Belgium by the Germans and the atrocities there was divine judgment for the terrible atrocities in the Belgian Congo by soldiers under Belgian officers, and under the auspices of the Belgian Government.

"In a subsequent interview, Mr. Bingham said that he firmly believed in the justice of the allies' cause in the present war. He did think, however, that Great Britain was unfortunate in her company, infidel France, Roman Catholic Belgium, pagan Russia and infidel Japan. Outside of the military party in Germany which had promoted the present conflict, Germany was quite as good as the allies of Great Britain."

The Rev. R. V. Bingham is typical of a class of Christian clergymen unfortunately not yet quite extinct. His knowledge of the subjects he treats of so authoritatively is commensurate with his Christian charity and breadth of view. Nevertheless it may be worth while in this connection to state the truth about the martyred Belgian people whose indomitable spirit and heroic sufferings have challenged the admiration and sympathy of the civilized world—and excited the petty envy of the Rev. R. V. Bingham and those who are able to listen to him without nausea.

The Congo atrocities ten years ago were a familiar newspaper topic and there is, therefore, a sufficiently hazy recollection of the facts remaining to make ill-informed and unthinking people give credence to slanderous charges such as the Rev. Mr. Bingham uses the Baptist pulpit to formulate.

The Congo Free State owes its existence to the ambition and force of character of a single individual. It dated its formal inclusion among the independent states of the world from 1885 when its founder, Leopold II., King of the Belgians, became its head. In 1876 Leopold summoned a conference at Brussels of the leading geographical experts of Europe which resulted in the creation of "The International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Africa." Committees were formed in the principal European countries, but the Belgium committee at Brussels, where also were the headquarters of the International Commission, was from the beginning more active than the others. After the return of Sir H. M. Stanley from his exploration of the Congo, he visited Brussels and a separate committee was organized known as the "Comité d'étude du Haut Congo." Shortly afterwards this committee became the "International Association of the Congo" which in its turn was the forerunner of the Congo Free State. This association was provided with a nominal capital of £40,000, but its funds were largely supplemented from the first from the private purse of King Leopold. Mr. Stanley, as agent of the Association which soon lost its international character and became in fact a private enterprise of the Belgian king, spent much time in the Congo where by 1884 he had established twenty-two stations for the purposes of civilization and colonization.

The United States of America on 22nd of April, 1884, recognized the Association as a properly constituted State. Germany was the next great power to recognize the Association as an independent State; then Great Britain, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Holland, Spain, France, Russia, Sweden and Norway and Denmark gave it recognition as a sovereign State, and finally Belgium. The Belgian chamber authorized King Leopold "to be chief of the State founded in Africa

by the International Association of the Congo" and declared that "the union between Belgium and the new State of the Congo shall be exclusively personal."

When the Rev. Mr. Bingham talks of the responsibility and culpability of the Belgian people and the Belgian Government with regard to the Congo he shows just about the amount of knowledge of his subject that one might expect from the preacher of such a sermon as the one we are considering. Leopold II. was King of the Belgians, but he was not a Belgian at all. His father, a German prince, was the uncle of Queen Victoria, and he himself was a close friend of his royal English relative. He was a very able man and a Catholic at least in name, a fact that, doubtless, will please Mr. Bingham. Still his Catholicity, such as it was, does not make the Catholic Belgians responsible for his personal conduct nor for the conduct of his personal enterprises.

With regard to the alleged Congo atrocities we have fortunately authorities more reliable and better informed than the Rev. Mr. Bingham and his credulous admirers.

Large areas were leased to companies with extensive powers; in many cases the state was also financially interested. This system of exploitation of the resources of the country was mainly responsible for the bad treatment of the natives. It will be recalled that Sir Roger Casement's more recent exposure of the Putumayo horrors in Peru involved a British rubber company whose head offices were in London, England.

The charges of ill-treatment of the natives of the Congo became so persistent that King Leopold in July, 1904, appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate conditions and if necessary to recommend reforms. This commission was composed of Judge M. Janssens of the Court of Cassation, Belgium, Baron Nisco, an Italian, and Doctor de Schumacher, Chief Justice of Lucerne, Switzerland. After five months on the ground the report of the commission was published. This report bore testimony to the real advance of civilization in the Congo. It recognized that the splendid campaign of the State against the Arabs put an end to the slave trade; that to the intestine wars of the native chiefs have succeeded peace and security; that the use of the flail and alcohol have been rigorously prohibited; and that cannibalism is practically abolished. Nevertheless, the commission confirmed the reports of grave abuses in the upper Congo and recommended a series of measures that would in its opinion suffice to ameliorate the evil.

It is to be noted that all this time Belgium was in no way responsible while the Congo remained an exclusively personal enterprise of the king. The Belgians were, however, keenly interested and at various times there was an agitation to take over the Congo State as a Belgian colony.

In 1906 Sir Edward Grey expressed the desire "that Belgium should feel that her freedom of action is unfettered and unimpeded and her choice unembarrassed by anything which we have done or are likely to do," but he added that if Belgium should fail to take action "it would be impossible for us to continue to recognize indefinitely the present state of things without a very close examination of our treaty rights and the treaty obligations of the Congo State." The United States Senate declared that it would support President Roosevelt in his efforts for the amelioration of the conditions of the inhabitants of the Congo. Reform associations in Belgium and in France also enlightened public opinion. The attitude of the powers was at the same time perfectly friendly to Belgium. In this way the movement for ending the baneful regime of Leopold II. was strengthened. Public opinion in Belgium was disturbed and anxious at the prospect of assuming responsibility for a vast, distant, and badly administered country likely for years to be a severe financial drain upon the finances of the State. But, though those who opposed annexation formed a numerous body, all political parties were agreed that in case of annexation the excesses which had stained the record of the Free State should cease.

On the 14th of November, 1908, the Congo Free State ceased to exist, the rights of sovereignty being taken over by Belgium the next day. From Nov. 15th, 1908, Belgium's responsibility dates; the absolutism of the

King was replaced by thorough parliamentary control. It was not accomplished without strenuous work on the part of the representatives of the Belgian people reinforced by powerful international influence. Since that time the territory is known as the Belgian Congo and the responsibility for its administration rests on the Belgian Government. Since that time there have been no charges of maladministration even by broad-minded, humane and well-informed missionaries such as the Rev. R. V. Bingham.

The Congo atrocities and Catholic Belgium have no more connection than has the Rev. Mr. Bingham with the conduct of General Joffre's campaign in France.

IRELAND AND THE WAR

Statistics compiled before Home Rule became an accomplished fact, or at least before the Home Rule bill became part of the law of the land, show that Kitchener's call for enlistment did not meet with so ready a response in Ireland as in Britain. Now enlistment in Ireland is going on with enthusiasm. Even so uncompromising an opponent of everything Nationalist as Windermere cables to the Star:

"John Redmond's earnestness in the recruiting campaign among the Nationalists is unquestioned, and he will succeed."

"Sentiment of the bulk of Nationalist Ireland undoubtedly favors the war."

In this connection, also, the Globe remarks very justly: "The taunt has been made that the National Volunteers have not recruited as largely as the Ulster Volunteers, but it must be borne in mind that the Ireland of the South has always given a larger proportion of fighting men to the British Army and that fifty thousand of them joined the colors on the outbreak of war."

A friend who spent a good deal of time in Ireland last summer informs us that he was astonished at the unanimity of Nationalists in their determination not to fight with Ulster over Home Rule; the opinion prevailed that Ulster would fight, but Irishmen were resolved that the British Army alone should uphold the authority of the British Parliament; they were not going to impute relations between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland for another century by fighting on opposite sides over Home Rule. Nevertheless they were keenly desirous of having an effective fighting force in the Nationalist Volunteers to protect and assert their rights under all circumstances.

Prime Minister Asquith in Dublin said: "Old animosities between us are dead, scattered like autumn leaves by the four winds of heaven. We are a united nation, owing and paying to the Sovereign the heartfelt allegiance of men who not only love but enjoy the liberty which our soldiers and sailors are fighting to maintain and extend to others. There is no question of compulsion or bribery. We want, and believe you are eager to give, the free will offering of a free people."

His reception showed that New Ireland at the dawn of a better day still retains the ancient Celtic fire and enthusiasm as well as the martial spirit of the race.

John Redmond summed up the whole mighty truth in these words: "I say to the Prime Minister and through him to the people of Great Britain: You have kept faith with Ireland: Ireland will keep faith with you."

If Orange Ulster outdoes Catholic Ireland in this crisis in the world's history there is not a Nationalist in Ireland, there is not a true Irishman anywhere who will not feel a thrill of generous pride in glory of our Orange-fellow-countrymen. Not Carson nor Bonar Law, nor any man whether through mistaken patriotism or from political motives will then be able to rekindle the dead ashes of Irish religious animosity. Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant, will have found that from Ulster to Tipperary is not such a long way after all.

The fact that the inconsequent Irish song "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" is heard on every march and on every battlefield where British troops are found in this campaign has its significance. Irish soldiers have always done their part. Not always, perhaps, has such generous recognition been accorded as that given by the Prime Minister in Dublin when he said: "The Empire always has been proud of its Irish regiments and never more proud than to-day." But in the incredible popularity of "Tipperary" we have an evidence of the good will, the mutual trust and con-

fidence, the feeling of genial good fellowship that have been begotten of the strenuous political battles which the people of Britain and the people of Ireland have fought side by side each for and with the other. Now they go side by side to do or to die together on the bloody field of battle to preserve their common ideals of freedom and right and justice. This war will destroy the last remnant of racial misunderstanding and distrust between the peoples of the two islands which God has joined together. It is vain to hope and trust that it will do as much for Ireland?

HAROLD OR PATRICK OR BOTH?

That serio-comic assailant of Rome and all its works and pomps has written us a letter in which he says: "If, however, you think you can bring forward indisputable evidence that will conclusively prove to him (Mr. McFaul) I was never what I profess to have been, I feel confident he will not hesitate to take up his pen against me."

Our letter was signed Harold Patrick Morgan; any others we have seen were rubber stamped plain Patrick Morgan. We do not know what Harold or Patrick or Harold Patrick "professes to have been" since he ceased to profess to have been a Catholic priest. And Harold knows that Patrick Morgan as an ex-priest had a strongly entrenched position in the hearts of many, a position from which he had to retire in disorder when he gave up "professing to have been" a priest.

Harold Patrick Morgan issues a solemn invitation to us to submit charges for his inquisitor-general Mr. McFaul to investigate. At the same time and in the same terms verbatim et letteratim et punctuatim Patrick Morgan issues a like invitation to several others. Will Pastor McFaul find out whether Harold Patrick Morgan is related to the Patrick Morgan known to fame? Or is "Harold" one of the "calumnies concocted and circulated against" "Patrick" or vice versa? For our part we shall be fully satisfied with Inquisitor McFaul's investigations if he finds out that Patrick Morgan really knows his own name.

REMINDS ONE OF IRELAND

"The greatest industry of Galicia, said to be, is that of the distilleries. One is reminded of Ireland, where similarly the manufacture and consumption of intoxicants goes with a somewhat backward agriculture."

The old anti-Irish feeling is passing but the impressions left by the old anti-Irish lies will linger for some time yet. Our friendly Scots confere of the Advertiser, quite as a matter of course and we are sure without malice aforethought, here furnishes a case in point.

About Galicia and the vodka-drinking Slavs we are not much concerned. It might, however, be well to correct some vague impressions by accurate statistics. Dr. G. Bertillon at the fourth annual Alcohol Congress held in Paris last summer provided us with this information: In litres of pure alcohol the per capita consumption of Great Britain is 7.77; that of Russia 5.21. Whether or not the Galicians are worse than their brother Slavs we do not know: probably not and therefore they are probably better off than the English, Irish and Scotch.

In 1906 a return was published by the British Board of Trade which, likewise allowing a certain proportion of pure alcohol for wine and beer, works out the statistics in gallons of pure alcohol per head for the period 1901-5. This gives the United Kingdom 3.42 and Russia 0.95. Canada, by the way, easily leads Russia with 1.25 gallons of pure alcohol to each Canadian.

Ireland, it is true, manufactures whiskey to a considerable extent. It is one of the great industries of prosperous Ulster. But Ireland drinks less than England, and England less than Scotland, always, it is understood, in proportion to population. The margin is not much to boast about; but enough to make boasting the wrong way look foolish.

But why did not the sad chief industry of Galicia remind the Advertiser of Scotland? Because, we imagine, such memories have to do with impressions much more than with accurate knowledge. This is an extract from the Encyclopaedia Britannica: "More than four-fifths of the distilleries at work in the United Kingdom are situated in Scotland. The leading distilling counties are Argyll, Banff, Elgin, Inverness and

Aberdeen, Perth and Ross and Cromarty, while the industry ("said to say") is found in seventeen other shires. In 1893-1894 the total net duty received for home-made spirits amounted to £5,461,108 and in 1903-1904 to £7,376,125. The production has attained to colossal dimensions . . . having practically doubled itself in ten years." Of course a lot of people outside of Scotland help to consume Scotland's product. And though we are a long way from Tipperary it is said that the product of Irish distilleries may be had in Canada.

Then, again, is agriculture in Ireland in a backward condition? The days of a vampire landlordism are past and gone. At present the farmers of Ireland are organized on co-operative principles and have been successful in establishing a large number of credit societies from which farmers can borrow at a low rate of interest. Agricultural societies actively co-operate with the Department of Agriculture in disseminating instruction in proper technical methods in every line of agricultural activity. Sir Horace Plunkett, for many years President of Irish Board of Agriculture, plainly told us a few years ago that there was a better public spirit, more intelligent co-operation and greater progress amongst the Irish farmers than is found either in Canada or the United States.

It might be a good thing now that we are all studying geography to correct old impressions by a more accurate knowledge of Ireland up to date.

MR. REDMOND TO THE LIONS

For more than a generation the late Patrick Ford's great newspaper, the Irish World, has been a tower of strength to the Irish national movement. In the hey-day of the Parnell agitation, during the dark days of the "Split," and in the last lap of victory under Redmond, it has worked wonders for the cause of Ireland. It is not much to say that without the Irish World Home Rule would not be to-day the law of the land. But whilst we gladly concede it the full meed of praise for its glorious past we shall not thereby debar ourselves from questioning the wisdom of its present stand on the Irish situation.

About the righteousness of this war there is no room for doubt. Ireland has fought England's battles when the righteousness of Britain's cause was not so self-evident. To-day, when Britain is pouring out men and treasure in fulfillment of a solemn pledge, in defence of the threatened liberties of a small and a peaceful nation, Ireland, true to her historic past, is as a unit in entering the lists. Her sympathies have ever been with the weak and the oppressed. Not to come to Britain's aid would be, then, to outrage the memories of her immortal dead who died that men might be free and untrammelled. From every conceivable motive of liberty and justice Ireland should be with Britain in this struggle. We are astounded that the Irish World should think otherwise. Pettiness and meanness is out of place in the columns of Patrick Ford's great journal.

Irish gratitude fights on the side of England. The English people have admitted the justice of Ireland's national claims, and the Act that recognizes her distinct nationality is now the law of the land. The Irish World has waged relentless war upon British rule in Ireland. That rule is now a thing of the past. Does the Irish World wish to see Prussian rule installed in its stead? We do not. We want Irish rule for the people of Ireland. Home Rule gives legal sanction to the government of Ireland according to Irish ideas. That government is menaced by the Prussian militarists. And yet the Irish World argues that this war is no concern of Ireland's? But we who live under free British constitutions feel that we are very vitally interested in the success or failure of England.

Because he is rallying the manhood of Ireland to the flag of the Empire Mr. Redmond is to be thrown to the lions. But, thank God, the Irish people think otherwise. Did Irishmen elect to remain passive spectators the while little Belgium is battling for her life we would feel that we no longer had a motherland over the seas. Did Ireland not reward trust by loyalty we would feel ashamed of our Irish blood. But England has redeemed her promise, and Ireland has kept her word, so all is well. And when the smoke of battle has cleared away, and we see the happenings of the

present in their proper perspective, it will not be Mr. Redmond but the Irish World that will be judged guilty of a false step. Home Rule is reason enough to justify Ireland's participation in this struggle. Belgium is another reason. And if the Irish World were but true to its past it would be on the side of Belgium, not against her. "What has Germany ever done to Ireland?" asks the World. Begging an Irishman's privilege may we not ask the World "what has Belgium ever done to Germany?" Moreover Ireland is not making war upon the German people, but upon the hateful militarism of Prussia. And from its defeat the German people stand to gain as much as anyone else.

The Irish World is laboring under a great disadvantage. Did it but know the truth the truth would make it free to love the liberty that flourishes everywhere beneath the Union Jack. England made a mistake in her treatment of Ireland. But that mistake has been rectified. Why not, then, let the dead past bury its dead. That would be true Christianity. Moreover it would be common sense. Ireland's future is bound up with the Empire. Irish patriots want nothing better than to be permitted to work out their country's destiny under the protection of the British flag. Freedom within the Empire is Ireland's slogan, and that freedom is to-day within her grasp. Let us cast aside the cobwebs of the past. Let us live in the present freedom, and not in the "dark and evil days" that are happily over and done with. We admire the liberty enjoyed beneath the Stars and Stripes, but, to use a rather slangy expression, the Stars and Stripes has nothing on the Union Jack. If proof be needed we point to the spectacle of Canada, Australia, South Africa, India and Ireland rallying as one man to the "old grey mother" in her hour of peril. Slaves do not so love the hand that smites them. It is because we are free, because this is a war for freedom, that we are all, Celt and Saxon, Boer and Briton, lined up beneath the Union Jack.

Its denunciation of Mr. Redmond's recruiting campaign is the Irish World's great blunder. It can work no harm in Ireland. It may tend to delay the reconciliation of Irish-America with England. But we put it to the Irish-American citizens of the great Republic, is it likely that Mr. Redmond would have kept his head during the storm and stress of the past eventful years only to lose it now when the storm has passed? Is not Mr. Redmond, the man on the spot, more likely to know what is best for Ireland than a journalist in a New York printing office? We leave it to Irish-America to answer.

COLUMBA

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE SEVERAL verdicts of artists and historians published in last week's CATHOLIC RECORD as to the glories of the great cathedral of Rheims so wantonly destroyed by the German armies, may fittingly be supplemented by the impressions of a noted English convert, who, more than sixty years ago, while yet an Anglican, visited France and Italy for the purpose of studying the Catholic Church at close range. Mr. T. W. Allies, after Newman the most eminent intellectual of the Oxford converts, during the course of his tour in 1845, spent some time at Rheims, and in his "Journal in France," published in 1849, has left on record his impressions of one of the noblest monuments which medieval piety had bequeathed to posterity. He says:

"THE OUTSIDE of Rheims is all that can be conceived of beauty, grandeur, unity of conception, delicacy and boldness of execution; and this, though the one great design of the architect has not been completed, for the four towers of the transepts have had no spires since the great fire of 1491. The design of these towers is very singular; and the skill with which a strength sufficient to support spires 400 feet high is veiled, so as to make the towers appear quite pierced and open, seems to me one of the greatest marvels of architecture. The prototype exists in the four towers of Laon, which have the same design in embryo; but this is so enriched, expanded and beautified by the architect of Rheims as to become his own in point of originality, and certainly in grace and boldness not to be surpassed. The superiority of the western front, even over that of Amiens, is very marked—indeed, I think it perfect; and the whole of the east end, the side of the church rear as nearly the same degree. No words can convey any notion of it."

CONTINUING: "We went up the great towers, and could hardly admire enough the delicacy and boldness of the four corner turrets in open work. . . . The immense quantity of sculpture all over this exterior cannot be conceived, nor the ingenuity with which it is made to serve for decoration. A day is far too short a time to carry off the impression of it. The mind is fatigued and exhausted during many a visit, and is not at ease till it has sufficiently mastered the whole, in order to fix itself for admiration and contemplation on some particular part. It would be a good week's work to see it, and it should be revisited once a year by all those who talk of the 'darkness' of the Middle Ages, and the greatness of the nineteenth century, which is sorely taxed to keep in repair what they constructed, and has not sufficient piety to restore a part where the architect's design has been left incomplete."

THE REVEREND editor of the Globe, with true Presbyterianunction, waxed very virtuous in denunciation of German barbarity in Belgium and France. Not since the ancient Goths and Vandals, he said, had the world witnessed anything to parallel the campaign of destruction to which the German invaders have committed themselves in both countries since the beginning of the war, and words failed to express his horror and detestation of the wanton character of the ruin and desolation which they have left in their train. It is but fair to suppose that in the warmth of his indignation the reverend editor forgot for the time being all about the doings of his forefathers in the Presbyterian faith in the Scotland of the sixteenth century. If so, a little honest reflection would have served to convince him that he was rather hard upon the Kaiser and his armies.

FOR, WHILE NOTHING can be said in extenuation of the ferocious vandalism of the latter in the destruction of Louvain and of Rheims Cathedral, and of other wanton acts laid to their charge, as contrasted with the sixteenth century fanatics the plea of lust of blood and conquest might at least be put forward in the German behalf. This plea, poor as it is in the light of the boasted enlightenment of the age, can have no application whatever to the rapacious hordes let loose upon his country by that paragon of mendaciousness and ferocity, John Knox, the "Reformer," and father of Presbyterianism in Scotland.

LET ANYONE who has felt his fund of indignant denunciation exhausting itself in contemplation of the German atrocities just take up any reputable history of Scotland and study the sequel of the "Reformation." Or, perhaps better still, if the opportunities is afforded him of visiting that country let his rambles lead him to the ruins of cathedrals and religious houses—beautiful beyond description, even in their ruins—which dot the land, and, bearing in mind that their destruction was due solely to religious hate and fanaticism—without shadow of provocation—he will, as the circle of his observations widens, find himself realizing that after all even German destructiveness is outdone by the studied ferocity of the entire brood of Scottish Reformers. The editor of the Globe, who has upon occasion displayed some degree of receptivity, might with this in mind re-read the history of Scotland to advantage.

THE WAR with Germany has drawn attention once more to the venerable person of the Empress Eugenie, now in her eighty-eighth year, who in the day of her regnancy was the "first lady to the World." It is forty-four years now since she wore the crown, but, in dignified retirement in England—the refuge of so many deposed sovereigns—is said to wear her years with the grace of her prime, and to still interest herself in world politics. She was by far the most talked of woman in Europe for eighteen years, or from the time of her wedding to the day when the Prussian armies entered Paris and a revolution forever robbed her husband of his crown, and her of her queenly coronet. Exile began from that day, and, unless she is more than human, the prospect of humiliation of the nation which sealed her fate cannot but be sweet to her. The Germans have not been tender in dealing with French monarchs, and had they laid hands upon the Emperor and his consort the latter might not have been spared to