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LONDON, SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 1917

THE IRISH CONVENTION A WAR MEASURE

If democracy means anything it means government with the consent, by the aid, and in the interests of the governed. That the great struggle now convulsing the civilized world is a struggle—final and decisive it may be for generations—to maintain and perpetuate that democratic ideal and practice, is the asseveration of every spokesman of the allied democracies fighting for existence against the Teutonic ambition for militaristic world dominion. And these solemn professions we believe are fundamentally true.

It might be expected that everyone, jealous of the good name of Great Britain, everyone sincerely desirous of winning the War would do all that in him lies to settle the Irish question, to remove at once this stigma on the good name of Britain and the greatest obstacle to the whole-hearted concentration of all the moral and material forces of civilization on the one supremely important common purpose.

Some of our Canadian newspapers, however, are more concerned with the threadbare sophistries which seek to justify England's ignominious and humiliating position in the eyes of the world than they are to facilitate solution of the Irish problem. One of these worn out sophistries has been definitely consigned to the rubbish-heap. It is no longer seriously pretended that Ireland is "two nations." The one argument with some shreds and patches of specious respectability to cover its naked advocacy of diverse weights and diverse measures when dealing with Ireland is thus typically expressed by the London Free Press in commenting on the government proposal of an Irish convention:

"Out of this proposal will come at least this: That the Irish problem will appear before the world as a matter concerning which the British Government has washed its hands."

Some nineteen centuries ago there was an Imperial Governor who was confronted with a similar problem where political interests conflicted with justice and right. He washed his hands and proclaimed himself innocent of the death of the Just Man whom he condemned to be crucified. But the unjust sentence does not appear before the world as a matter concerning which Pilate "washed his hands." It is not so easy for a moral coward "to appear before the world" as just and generous while shirking his undeniable responsibility.

But our ultra-loyal Canadian papers spoke too soon. The British Government had no intention of playing that ignoble role which a certain section of our press would so readily justify. The next day the cable told us of a speech of stupendous import delivered by Lord Curzon in the House of Lords:

"Lord Curzon emphasized that the Government's proposals were as much a war measure as any urgency act passed. He said that at each stage of the war while he was a member of the Government it had been brought home to all of them that conditions in Ireland had been a source not of strength but of weakness to the common cause.

"There was no month but the figure of Ireland had arisen like a spectre across their path."

Every word of that speech, which we reproduce in another column is, a rebuke to the bigots who are responsible for creating and perpetuating that shameful state of affairs. It is a complete justification and endorsement of H. G. Wells' outspoken statement that "they would wreck the Empire rather than relinquish their Ascendancy in Ireland." But before the gathering storm of overwhelming public sentiment in England even the Diehard Tories, if not for justice sake, if not from patriotic motives, at least and at last in sheer terror of inevitable retribution, recoil from the consequences of their obstinate and shameless folly.

The course of Canadian papers in aiding and abetting the enemy within the gates was probably determined by the apparent meaning of Carson's announcement that he was with the Ulster Orangemen whether they chose union and victory or disunion and defeat. But this was only the truncheon of the wash-buckler excusing his back-down. Carson was and remains a member of the Government which has already plainly intimated that the irreconcilables of N.E. Ulster must find common ground on which to stand with their fellow countrymen in reaching a settlement. Moreover, it appears that the cabled summary of Carson's speech was misleading; for T. P. O'Connor describes it as temperate and friendly.

With the tremendous force of public opinion behind it, there can now be no doubt that the Government will honestly bend every effort to make the Irish Convention an urgent war measure to effect a real and permanent settlement of the Irish question. That such settlement is possible cannot be doubted. There is no conceivable guarantee for safeguarding the rights of Protestant minority that Catholic Ireland will not readily agree to—short of perpetuating the parasitic Ascendancy which has made possible for an Irishman such a political career as Carson's.

We regard what is called Sinn Feinism in its later manifestations as merely an expression of resentment, disappointment and unrest. In the face of the serious business of the Convention it will shrink to insignificant proportions, but it will doubtless receive much more notoriety than it deserves.

The press of self-governing Canada in so far as it may be taken across the ocean as reflecting Canadian public opinion can aid materially in bringing about that settlement which the men at the helm in this perilous time solemnly declare is necessary to avert shipwreck. And just in so far as they fail to do this they are giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

QUEBEC AND CONSCRIPTION

French-Canadians have every whit as much right to object to conscription as have the labor unions. For the Government or Parliament to enforce conscription with no sort of semblance of a mandate from the people is open to serious objection in the minds of many thinking Canadians who yield to none in their loyalty to Canada.

The Manchester Guardian, commenting on the proposal, said:

"Two courses are open to Premier Borden: either to utilize the militia act to secure a large extension of his forces, thus releasing others for the front, or to put the issue of conscription direct before the people. The latter method was adopted in Australia, and though the Government failed of their aim, it is so clearly the more honest procedure that the Canadian Government is not likely to incur the odium of foregoing it."

What is said by this great English journal cannot turn into sedition when said in Quebec.

There are Canadians, however, of both parties who believe that conscription is the only fair, equitable and democratic method of distributing the burdens of a national obligation which no one outside of a few—and these not confined to Quebec—pretends to deny.

In justice to Quebec the deliberate conclusion of the Hon. Mr. Blondin, Postmaster-General, based on the knowledge and experience gained in his interrupted recruiting tour should be taken into account.

"Short as it was, it was enough to show that if Quebec had been well organized from the French-Canadian point of view at the beginning of the War, and if the organization had been immediately placed under the direction of a man like Gen. Lessard, and an appeal made to all French-Canadians to enlist in French-Canadian units and preserve their identity, Quebec would have replied en masse."

It is neither good patriotism nor good politics to set Ontario against Quebec or Quebec against Ontario. We are not concerned just now to oppose the blame for a condition of things as undeniable as it is deplorable.

While conceding the absolute right of politicians and press to discuss the attitude of Quebec in the War, or any other attitude it may assume affecting the public life of Canada, we commend the tone and spirit of a letter to the Globe by James L. Hughes, which we reproduce elsewhere.

At the same time the right to differ from the majority, the right to hold their own views and demand for them respect and consideration, lends no respectability to hooliganism. A few French-Canadian hooligans do far greater injury to Quebec than all the Orangemen of Ontario put together. And the authorities of Quebec will encounter no interference from the rest of Canada in any method they may choose to adopt in clearing the good name of their province from the disgrace brought upon it by her own unworthy sons.

A GIGANTIC UNDERTAKING

"A despotic government is the best for war, and a popular government the best for peace." So wrote Cardinal Newman shortly after the Crimean War. Again he says: "War tries the British constitution in the same way, to use a homely illustration, that it tries a spoon to use it for a knife, or a scythe or hay-fork to make it do the work of a spade." So this great Englishman, who had all the Englishman's love for the liberty enjoyed under popular government and all his aversion from the restraints of despotic rule, concluded from his analysis of the causes of the blunders of the Crimean War.

During this great war his conclusions have been so clearly verified that to a great extent popular government has been superseded and arbitrary powers conferred on those who seem most competent to conduct the supremely important business of the war. But it was not until the evident breakdown of the cherished constitutional peace methods that others more suitable were sought. What in this respect is true of England is true a hundred-fold of the United States. Profiting by England's experience the States have begun at the beginning by conferring practically despotic powers on the President.

But there is another sense in which Newman's dictum is true. In the despotic state the citizens are trained to unquestioning obedience; in the self-governing state the people their democratic qualities and characteristics even after surrendering the accustomed constitutional safeguards of popular rights. Hence with all the powers that he could ask the President of the United States has a gigantic undertaking on hand to mobilize a hundred million people for the stupendous efforts required of a modern nation at war.

A dispatch to the London Times from a correspondent in Chicago helps one to appreciate the magnitude of the complex task confronting President Wilson:

He bases his message on "definite information secured from trustworthy sources scattered throughout the entire Middle West and South."

"All reports," he says, "clearly indicate that the fundamental facts and possibilities of the war are little better understood now than before war was declared. Everything is going on as usual. People have no conception of the changes impending in the near future. The war is regarded by a majority of citizens in the West and South as meaning something to Europe, but not affecting this country—and this in spite of the enthusiastic reception of the British and French missions and the voluminous output of news of war preparations and plans from Washington. There is no conception of actual individual responsibility of all citizens as being essential to the successful prosecution of the war."

"Altogether the results of the most careful inquiry point to the absolute necessity of a Government publicity campaign on a large scale if the people of this country are to be relied upon for substantial and fully organized cooperation with the Allies within the next twelve months."

Editorially the Daily Mail, which also features the dispatch, says:

"It may seem to many to be also a depressing account, but nobody who knows American conditions and who remembers what we went through ourselves in the early stages of the War will be surprised. The task of starting the necessary machinery and of arousing and holding popular interest, which we found

difficult enough, even in Great Britain, is a thousand times more so in a country separated from the scene of battle by the whole width of the Atlantic, and practically secure from any direct attack from the enemy. The Americans will grow into their undertakings, as we had to grow into ours, and it will be a slow and arduous process; but there is no doubt whatever that in time it will be accomplished."

In a communication to the New York Times Joseph H. Crooker gives corroborative evidence:

Amherst, Mass., May 19, 1917. To the Editor of The N. Y. Times:

"I have just received from a friend in the Central West a letter in which I find the following paragraph:

"While it was a question of England as against Germany our sympathies have been with Germany, as has been the case with a large portion of the people hereabouts. We have no sympathy for England. She would better have thought of Ireland than Belgium. Her blockade of Germany has been as wicked as the German submarine campaign. There is no enthusiasm among the men here for the course which President Wilson has embarked upon. Those who condemned La Follette while he was one of the 'wilful twelve,' when they now see what war taxes they will have to pay, are saying that 'little Bob' was right."

"The writer of this letter is a man of prominence, a minister, a university graduate, of English stock, with Mayflower ancestors, with no Irish blood, and he has wide experience, giving him more than usual opportunity for sensing public opinion. My own observation during last winter at a college town in the West confirms his report. The Faculty and students of the theological department, with few exceptions, were extreme pacifists with decided anti-British and pro-German opinions.

"The state of mind here revealed is truly appalling.

"This letter, representing conditions which exist in various parts of our nation, is an ominous sign. It reveals 'a state of mind' which is more dangerous than German submarines."

Mr. Crooker is neither Irish nor anti-British. In fact he waxes as eloquent as the Toronto Daily News in excusing England's treatment of Ireland.

In the circumstances to persist in antagonizing the wide influence of the great Irish element in the States is, to quote the words of Mr. Crooker, "moral lunacy."

The British Government understands.

Lord Curzon says: "Nobody in touch with American thought could doubt that an immense impetus would be given to the zeal with which America would prosecute the war if only she knew that this rift in the lute was closed and the Anglo-Saxon race was bending its undivided energies to the pursuance of the common end."

Soon even Canadian admirers of the strictly conditional loyalty of N. E. Ulster will get their eyes opened.

CHURCH HONOR ROLLS

To ascertain the church affiliations of our gallant Canadian soldiers is a matter of present interest and of future historic value. Hence request of the Army and Navy Board is one that should be complied with promptly and with conscientious attempt at accuracy; for such record whether accurate or not will tend to assume an official character and be in time regarded as an authentic source of history.

In this connection we reprint on another page a letter to the Christian Guardian from John Webster, of Kemptonville, Ontario.

Referring to Dr. Moore's suggestion of using the Church Honor Rolls as convenient and reliable sources of information in the premises, Mr. Webster points out that to use such Honor Rolls would be to perpetuate grave inaccuracies.

"I saw an Honor Roll," writes Mr. Webster, "in one village containing several hundred names. I found there the names of all the soldiers for miles around, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. Names are left off that ought to be on, and other names on more than one Honor Roll."

If such ludicrous padding can be openly resorted to when the names are recorded, what may we expect when numbers only are dealt with?

Whether such lists are used or not, if the same indiscreet not to say dishonest zeal finds an outlet in making returns to the Army and Navy Board, its records will be a grotesque distortion of facts.

Would it not be possible to provide some checks that would enforce reasonable accuracy and honesty? If the thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing right. Each municipality and each county might have an interdenominational committee on which, of course, every church

would be represented. Official lists could be secured from the Militia Department and the returns checked off by the local and county committees.

If such scheme be devised a serious and important undertaking may have a farcical and harmful result.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

MUCH PROMINENCE was given in Canadian newspapers to a rather ill-considered report that the warmth of Marshall Joffre's reception in Montreal was somewhat cooled by an impression that got abroad in Catholic circles to the effect that France's great soldier is both a Protestant and a Freemason. Whether having any basis in fact or not, the reception to the Marshall was a tribute to his services as savior of France, and, as such, whatever his religious affiliations, was participated in by the Archbishop of Montreal, his clergy, and Catholics generally with as great warmth and enthusiasm as by any others. What appears to have been the only discordant note arose at the meeting of the Protestant Ministerial Association on the Monday, where a resolution was introduced protesting against the Sunday reception as a "violation of the Sabbath and the rights of the Protestant churches." Wherein this "violation" consisted was not made clear.

TO DISPUTE about this or that man's religion because he happens to loom largely in the public eye is of doubtful propriety. An incident which happened during Marshall Joffre's visit to Baltimore, however, does him all the more credit if the assertion made at the Montreal Ministerial Association meeting to the effect that he is a Huguenot is correct. The incident is thus reported by the Baltimore Sun: "One who had not seen it (the procession escorting the French Mission) until that moment, stood in a window in a big gray house on Charles street—a slightly bent, white-haired man in scarlet robes—Cardinal Gibbons. Father Fletcher stood beside him. Joffre saw him as soon as he saw Joffre, and then one of the thrills of the day occurred. The big figure of the Marshal of France rose straight up in the plunging automobile, and with his hand at salute he faced toward the Cardinal until he could see him no longer."

THE FRENCH Mission's visit to Baltimore furnished another incident which may serve to illustrate Marshall Joffre's characteristics as a soldier. We reproduce the Sun's version of it:

"That was the departure of the French Mission, so far as most of Baltimore saw it. They didn't see Marshall Joffre put on the train with Viviani's party when he should have been put on the other train, and coming off, with his eyes shooting the same fire and his voice uttering the same sentences that he uttered when he fell on the pany bed. That is Joffre's fighting side—the side that comes out when things happen that he doesn't like.

"They didn't see him when the train pulled out, five minutes after he entered his car. He was bent over a table, writing. He dug his pencil into the paper in front of him and now and then he tugged at his white moustache and frowned. His red cap was still on his head. He was still writing when his and Viviani's train pulled out. He must have looked something like that when he was going over war maps at the Battle of the Marne."

"ONE RESULT of the revolution in Russia," says a Presbyterian missionary in Korea, writing to the Foreign Mission Board of his church in Canada, "has been the opening up of the eastern part of the country so as to permit of the teaching of Christianity." That Russia is already in possession of a Christianity much more closely approximating to that of the Apostles than the diluted type represented by this missionary apparently did not occur to him. Russia is a land of many contradictions, and its people, so long the victims of despotic rulers and of a church completely dominated by them, are doubtless deficient in many of the qualities which ordinarily characterize a democracy, but that they have anything to learn in the way of faith or morals from the rapidly disintegrating Protestantism of the West is a gratuitous assumption, in full keeping with that which intrudes missionaries into the centres of a Catholic population.

MUSCOVITE CHRISTIANITY has suffered much in purity and integrity and still suffers from its separation from the one Seat of Authority and

Centre of Unity at Rome, but it is not what Protestantism has been from its beginning, the merest subjectivism, recognizing no guide but the human intellect and bowing to no authority but the caprice of the individual. To the average Russian, faith is still, despite the assumptions of the State, a divine gift, and outweighs in the balance, therefore, all the eclectic creeds of Protestantism. On the one side, it is true, is enslavement by the State, and separation from Rome, but on the other is the wildest and most ridiculous license of opinion. Unless it is open to denial that Christianity is a religion of the supernatural there can be no two opinions as to the side on which the advantage lies.

THE WORLD-WIDE character of the work of the Christian Brothers is exemplified in the death in March last of Brother Bernadine Phillips at Calcutta. Brother Bernadine, who was born in Waterford in 1890, and entered the Christian Brothers at Dublin in 1908, had during his short life seen service in Ireland, in Newfoundland, and, for the last fifteen months of his life in India. It was in 1913 that he was selected with three other Brothers to go to Newfoundland. He taught in the schools at St. John's and so endeared himself to both Brothers and pupils that when it became known in 1915 that he was stricken with the fatal malady, phthisis, a gloom was cast over the little colony, likened by an overseas contemporary to the fogs on the Grand Bank. He returned to Ireland and was at once sent out to India in the hope of his life being prolonged in that climate. He resumed teaching but only for a short time, when it became evident that his days were numbered. His death took place on March 22nd to the great sorrow and regret of his associates.

AVE MARIA's comments on "Catholics and the Lost Cause," occasioned by an outbreak of bigotry in the South against Catholics, has been widely copied. Bishop Keiley of Savannah, himself a veteran soldier of the Confederacy, had been invited to deliver the regular Memorial Day oration and this was the signal for the outbreak. Ave Maria's comments were of the nature of a reminder of what Catholics had done for the "Lost Cause," and it cited Father Abram Ryan's poems, particularly "The Conquered Banner;" Augustus Requier's "Ashes of Glory;" Marie La Coste's "Somebody's Darling;" and several other poems by Catholics as having done more than all others to "put the Confederate cause into the literature of song." The point was well taken, and if happily a more enlightened spirit pervaded the present Southern people it might have lasting effect. But the type of religion that for the most part now prevails in the extreme South is the type that stands back of the "Missions to the Latin nations," and is voiced by the strident tones of the notorious "Tom" Watson—a type not to be reasoned with or convinced of error.

IT IS SINGULAR that Ave Maria in enumerating the several poets who have glorified the Southern cause in verse makes no mention of James Ryder Randall, who, after Father Ryan, is undoubtedly the chief laureate of the Confederacy. Randall, of Acadian ancestry on his mother's side, was born a Catholic, and for a long period was identified with Catholic journalism. He for several years edited the Morning Star of New Orleans, and his letters to the Catholic Columbian, of Columbus, Ohio, were long a feature of that paper. A poet by nature, he was a journalist by force of circumstances, and to the hard struggle which he had through life it is due that his poetical work is not more voluminous. A small volume, of less than 200 pages, published after his death in 1908, and republished with some additions in 1910 is all that has been preserved.

WHILE RANDALL wrote many lyrics worthy of remembrance his fame chiefly rests on the stirring battle-song, "Maryland! My Maryland!" The circumstances under which this was written are well known. Set to music in Baltimore and sung without premeditated effect in camp, its inspiring tones immediately "caught on," and were soon heard throughout the whole Confederacy. Its audience is now world-wide. Just as Ryan's "Conquered Banner" is undoubtedly the great elegy of the "Lost Cause," so is "Maryland! My

Maryland!" its great battle-song. It was one of Oliver Wendell Holmes regrets that he could not have written a poem that would have been as effective in the cause of the North as "Maryland" was in that of the South—a remark reminiscent of Southey's saying that he would rather have written Gray's Elegy than take Quebec.

"NO CANADIAN library, whether private or public," we are assured by The Presbyterian, "is complete without the 'Ralph Connor' books." The avowal cannot be said to err on the side of modesty. Possibly our contemporary means no Presbyterian library, but even so the assertion seems to call for some modification.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

CONVENTION PROSPECTS BRIGHT

DANGER FROM CRAZY FACTIONISTS RATHER THAN FROM ULSTER

Special Cable to the CATHOLIC RECORD (Copyright 1917, Central News)

London, May 26th—The atmosphere in the House of Commons, though not entirely cloudless, is inclined to fair weather. The debate over Premier Lloyd George's proposal for a convention of Irishmen, of every political complexion, to settle the Home Rule question, though marred by two very unwise speeches, one of a stubbornly Orange hue by Sir John Lonsdale, representing the Ulstermen, and the other a wild, inconsequent and factious speech by William O'Brien, was otherwise conciliatory and sanguine. Everybody regarded the speeches of John Redmond and Joseph Devlin as greatly contributing to the hopefulness of the convention. Sir Edward Carson actually saved the situation from the impasse threatened by Sir John Lonsdale, by temperate and friendly utterance.

There is now little doubt that all same opinion in Ireland will accept the convention in the spirit proposed by Premier Lloyd George, and that every effort will be made to make it a success. However, the factionists and cranks are not appeased and their policy will be one of pure wrecking. As they found no difficulty in uniting amid all their differences in an effort to destroy the Redmond constitutional movement, so they will do nothing that might bring about a settlement of the Irish question even though full liberty for Ireland was offered them on a gold salver.

This factional lunacy, which is doing its utmost to dash the great gift of freedom from Ireland's hands, is nothing short of suicidal. That Irish hands themselves seek to destroy the golden opportunity presented by the convention, is even more tragic than even any of the many tragedies which color Irish history.

The prospect of a settlement of the Home Rule Question, however, becomes brighter with each passing hour. The chief difficulty at present lies in the selection of a chairman for the convention. General Smuts for Boer War fame, would have been an ideal selection for the place for today; he is the idol of all parties in both England and Ireland, but William O'Brien, in the course of the debate, made a sneering observation concerning General Smuts, which was rather calculated to discourage the great South African from undertaking so difficult a task.

The composition of the convention is engaging the close attention of Henry E. Duke, Chief Secretary of State for Ireland, who is one of the warmest friends of Ireland. Even Premier George midst his many war problems, and other anxieties, gives some hours nearly every day to helping the Chief Secretary, while Sir Edward Carson is exercising his utmost influence among his own followers in trying to bring them to a reasonable state of mind.

It is certain that the convention will bring together for the first time in a century the men of Ulster and the rest of Ireland; it will bring about a saner, more tolerant and more sympathetic temper between the people who are divided perhaps even more by personal unacquaintance than by old racial or religious passions.

One satisfactory episode of the debate in the House of Commons was Ginnell's atrocious lie that the Irish party had cheered the Dublin executions, which had done duty in the Counties of Roscommon and Longford, was stuffed down his throat by the Irish members and by the solemn word of the speaker of the House of Commons, who was in the chair when the alleged incident was said to have taken place.

THE PRAYER OF A CATHOLIC SOLDIER

An Irish soldier at the front in Europe wrote in a letter: "And now before we rush into battle, I pray God if I be mortally struck, mutilation will leave me a hand to bless myself, and lips untouched so as again to say a prayer before the end comes." The above, says the Catholic Bulletin, sounds like a Christian echo from the old Roman arena.