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**THE IRISH HOME-RULE  
CONVENTION**



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TORONTO

# THE IRISH HOME-RULE CONVENTION

'THOUGHTS FOR A CONVENTION'

BY

GEORGE W. RUSSELL (A. E.)

'A DEFENCE OF THE CONVENTION'

BY

THE RIGHT HON.  
SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

AN AMERICAN OPINION

BY

JOHN QUINN

**New York**

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1917

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, September, 1917.

SEP 20 1917

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no. 1.

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AN AMERICAN OPINION

By JOHN QUINN





# THE IRISH HOME-RULE CONVENTION

## AN AMERICAN OPINION

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### I

#### AN AMERICAN'S WAR CREDO

I AM glad to be one of a few million Americans who have neither changed their views nor found it expedient or politic, because America has entered the war as one of the Allies, to change their views upon the war or its cause and the aims of the conspirators who began it or of the terms upon which it shall end. I have said, and written from the beginning of the war, that there could be no real peace with the Germans until the German philosophy, the German doctrine, the Ger-

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man practice and the German religion of might above right, of philosophized butchery, of the belief that wars pay, was not only knocked out of the heads of the German kaiser and the German general staff and the German war party conspirators, but out of the heads of the German people themselves. Thanks to the English blockade and now to our own embargo the pinch of hunger is being felt in Germany, but German militarism still flourishes and the organized butcheries continue still. Germany has always believed and still believes in brute force. Now that her plans for world conquest in this war have miscarried, she is beginning to rely upon her organization for peace to get her own terms. Autocracy can not only make war better than democracy but it hopes to make peace better than democracy, for it relies upon bribery and the purchase and corruption of

the purchasable and corruptible in every country. Germany knows that in these days nations fight as nations and that the armies on the fighting lines are but the advance guards of the greater armies that are entire nations. She had so organized her national life that she could militarize all her resources and industries upon a moment's notice. She knew, and counted upon the fact, that England and France and Russia could not. But now France and England and Italy have organized themselves militarily. The United States is organizing herself militarily. When the United States shall have militarily mobilized not merely her fighting men but her vast resources, and shall have joined with France, England, Italy and Russia in the crusade to defeat German militarism, the combination will be irresistible. Germany knows this well. Hence her feverish desire for peace *now*,

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while she still has the war map to point to and to trade upon.

Germany still is the child of "scientific barbarism." She had money, but the collapse of German credit is now evident to impartial economic experts. She is striving for peace, and her spies and propagandists are working for peace in Russia and Scandinavia and Switzerland and Holland and the United States, with brazen impertinence, not because she has suffered a change of heart, not because she has come to disbelieve in the massacre of women, children and old men, not because she has sickened of burning and destroying towns and villages, not because she has developed a new sense of justice and national honor, but because the material resources and the military organization upon which she relied are beginning to wear. The signs of the creaking of the machines are evident. Her rails and

rolling stock must be wearing out, the fuel for her motors and submarines running low, her supply of nitrates diminishing, her stores of wheat, copper, nickle, cotton and rubber going down, and the stored-up munitions, provisions and army supplies upon which she relied for quick victory becoming exhausted. It is written that they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Germany has worshipped and still worships brute force and only by the force of the great democracies of the world may she be overcome.

I do not believe, and I have never believed, in the distinction attempted to be made between the German people and those who began and are carrying on the war. The German people, as well as the kaiser and his fellow-conspirators, believed enthusiastically in war. For a hundred years wars had paid Germany. This war has been popular in Germany

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It has been carried on *by the German people* with all the zeal and ardour of religious fanatics. Its worst infamies have been defended and justified *by the German people*. German atrocities in Belgium, Austrian atrocities in Serbia, the *Lusitania* infamy, the submarine piracy, were approved *by the German people generally*. They were not merely approved but were generally applauded and exulted in and defended *by the German people*, by the press, by the publicists, by the professors, by the German Catholics, by the Jews, by the Socialists, by the leaders of all parties, by the great associations and corporations and by the whole nation. Certain German Catholic defenses both in Germany and the United States were particularly rancid and nauseating.

The world has not forgotten the German cry *Deutschland über Alles* or the German *Hymn of Hate* which was sung

and rejoiced in by men, women and children all over Germany. It was not alone the German officers or the general staff who were guilty of the revolting and bestial cruelties and destruction in Belgium and France. It may be said the atrocities in Belgium have ceased. But if one wishes to know whether Germany still believes in frightfulness, one should read the pamphlet just published entitled *Frightfulness in Retreat* (Hodder & Stoughton, London), which shows in seventy-six pages what the German soldiers of the retreating army in France have done. If after that there still remains any doubt in the mind of a candid reader, let him read *The War on Hospital Ships*, from the narratives of eye-witnesses, and the verdict on the German outrages expressed by the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, a body of the highest standing and most scrupulous impartiality, addressed to the

German Government January 29, 1917. The deportation and forced labour of the Belgian civil population, the systematic exhaustion of the economic resources of occupied Belgium, the extinction of Belgian competition for the benefit of German industry, and the many and unspeakable outrages committed by Germans in occupied France and Belgium, all prove that the Germans *as a people* are stained with crime and infamy. An article in the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1917, entitled *At War with the German People*, by Brigadier-General F. G. Stone, C. M. G., demonstrates the utter absurdity of the claim that the Allies have no quarrel with the German people.

Even in the United States, representative Germans and representative German societies, with a few exceptions, have never openly condemned the German atrocities in Belgium or the Austrian



atrocities in Serbia or the *Lusitania* infamy or the innumerable other cases of German cruelty, perfidy and culculated barbarity. The many cowardly, detestable and criminal German plots, conspiracies and murderous outrages in this country, both before and since the United States came into the war, have not been generally condemned or disapproved by representative Germans or leading German societies in this country. A German may boast that "*after the war we shall organize sympathy,*" but the stain will endure.

While the proof sheets of this book were being read the papers had long cable dispatches regarding the reception in Germany of the President's reply to the Pope. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* said: "To Wilson the Imperial Government is the merciless dictator of Germany but he himself has to add that *our nation is today at one with its Government.*" The socialist

paper *Vorwärts* said: "The German people are fighting this most terrible of battles not for the rights of a single family or a certain form of Government, but for its own existence." The *Frankfurter Zeitung* is also quoted as saying: "In all essential points the German people is one with its Government, especially in the policy that directly preceded and that has been followed during the war."

Something must have gone wrong with the German Government's bureau of news-control, for while some of the German editorials claim that Germany *has already* reformed itself, others claim that she is still to be reformed. For example, the *Vossische Zeitung* says: "The movement which Germany has created out of her very innermost is a genuine movement for liberty, and this path Germany *has taken* without advice from her foes and it does not lead to a sham democracy. The move-

ment respects the rights of a nation" (for instance, Belgium) "and opposes every oppression of a people" (that is, Belgium and occupied France and Serbia). "This movement purposes also, by virtue of this self-determination, to teach nations to further neighbourly interests" (again Belgium, occupied France, Serbia, Rumania, Poland) "thus producing an honest league of the weaker nations, which collectively will be strong and free and capable of defending themselves" (including of course Belgium, occupied France, Serbia, Rumania and Poland). "This is the political aim which Germany has in view for herself and the European continent, and the achievement of which will be secured through parliamentarization."

But according to *Vorwärts*, the *creation* and birth of the movement has not yet taken place. *Vorwärts* says: "The only thing lacking is a Government re-

sponsible to the people's representatives as it exists in all other countries of the world," and "the German people are more than ripe for democratic government."

While condemning the "inconceivably foolish proceedings of Zimmermann and other irritating incidents of the German-American conflict," the *Munich Post* says: "Have the democratic events of the last month, the rising of a new free and democratic Germany, with a program of peace by agreement through international tribunals and the democratization of empires, completely escaped his (Wilson's) notice?" But the *Vienna Neue Freie Presse* tops them all. It said: "Even if it were assumed that Germany had striven after world domination, no one will understand why the slaughter must continue, despite the frustration of the alleged plan of domination."

There are possibly some criminals in

prison as equally devoid of humour as they are of decency and honour, who would not "understand" after they have been caught, tried, convicted and sent to prison, why the imprisonment "must continue, despite the frustration of the alleged plan" of the criminal.

The German sense of justice is shown by this paper's allusion to such things as the sinking of the *Lusitania*, conspiracies to murder our citizens and to destroy property in the United States organized by German officers and agents and paid for by German money, the grotesque blundering of the German foreign office over Mexico and Japan, the slaughter of Americans on the high seas and such things as the cowardly murder by a German submarine of the sailors taken from the *Belgian Prince*, as "irritating incidents." International murder conspiracies seem to these Germans to be "mere

incidents.” This leads one to wonder how many of those on the ship that, under safe conduct from Great Britain, carried the honourable and truthful Bernstorff and his official and unofficial German aides and agents back to Germany, were, from Bernstorff down, morally and legally guilty of wholesale murder or conspiracy to murder or to destroy property or to incite strikes or to promote the cowardly crime of arson in the United States. While the scrupulous and truthful Bernstorff and his outlaw crew have gone, conspiracies and plottings continue still.

This may all seem a long, long way from Tipperary, but I have stated my war credo briefly because it shows the point of view from which I consider political and international questions other than the one great question, the successful conduct of the war and the making of a peace that means the end of German militarism.

## II

### SINN FEIN AND THE DUBLIN INSURRECTION

**W**HATEVER my interest in Irish affairs and in the home rule question before the war, when the war broke out I felt that if Germany should win, home rule and all similar questions would become minor ones, that the Irish and everybody else would be subject to Prussian sabres, and that it was the duty of all to defeat the Germans first.

While the coming in of the United States was an enormous gain for the western powers and will ultimately settle the contest by the defeat of Germany, it seemed to me, before the President's great message in answer to the Pope's peace

proposals, that there was a certain unreality in the motives as set forth in many of our speeches. The English, French, Italian and Russian soldiers were not fighting for democracy or any other *cracy* or for mere humanitarian or pacifist ideals. They were fighting for life first; for freedom of thought and development in whatever form, next; for the old, old watchwords of freedom and liberty, in fact. It is curious that those who blamed diplomacy for not preventing the war, now seem to look to diplomacy, to negotiations, to the presentation of the various countries' "cases" as a means of forcing peace. Diplomacy can no more always prevent wars than disinfection and sanitation can always prevent epidemics. But that is no valid argument against either diplomacy or sanitation. The mistake is to rely solely upon diplomacy to restore peace where diplomacy failed to prevent war.



Peace should come, when it does come, only from the surrender of Germany. Whether it will be because of military defeat, or financial collapse, or exhaustion of military supplies, or of starvation, or all of these things, does not affect the point. Argument is wasted on a people who have been taught to believe in and who worship "blood and iron."

The armies had and have no doubt about it. They care nothing for political formulas and for academic distinctions between nations and governments, which they looked and look upon either as mere rhetoric or as diplomatic suggestions to the German people to revolutionize their own government. Therefore I put the winning of the war above any Irish or any other political questions.

The *Sinn Feiners* seem to me to put the home rule and other Irish questions above the winning of the war. Cardinal

Newman, emphasizing the importance of clear definitions, once wrote that if people would define the meaning of the words or terms used by them or of the positions taken by them, they would generally find that argument was either superfluous or useless; that they were in fundamentals either so close together that argument was unnecessary or so wide apart that argument was useless. The *Sinn Feiners* and ultra-Nationalists seem to place Irish interests and Irish ideals first. That is one point of view. While I think it is a mistaken one, it is intelligible and logical. The world owes Belgium a debt of eternal honour and gratitude that she did not take that attitude when her hour of trial came. And France and the cause of liberty owe great Britain an eternal debt of gratitude that she promptly came to the side of France and Belgium when the awful decision of war for the right, or neutrality

for safety or profit, had to be made. With Germany the victor in this war the Irish in Ireland after six months' experience with the Germans would look back to the conditions in Ireland before the war as heaven itself.

If any Irishman who thinks, thinks that a German victory would help Ireland toward either self-government or independence, he might have his thought shaken by reading an amusing little book entitled *The Germans in Cork*, being the letters of His Excellency, the Baron von Kartoffel (Military Governor of Cork in the year 1918) and others, published very recently in Dublin (The Talbot Press, Ltd.). That little book shows that under German rule the *Sinn Feiners* are pro-English, that among other things Germany has confiscated all the money in the Irish savings banks and with that great fund is building barracks and concert halls and

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coffee palaces to replace the public houses ; that all men in Ireland between the ages of 17 and 35 are made to join the new army which, as a precautionary measure, is trained in Germany ; strikes are punished by deportation to Berlin, and it is of course "*verboten*" to use the Irish language. It is dead. The *Sinn Feiners* who were caught plotting against Germany were, as a precautionary measure, sent as exiles to the shores of the Baltic. His Excellency, Baron von Kartoffel, writes to his brother in Berlin complaining that under the English rule the Irish children's minds had been poisoned, warped and stunted, and claims that they ought to have been taught that "a certain amount of adversity is absolutely necessary to the growth of nations." Governor General Baron von Kartoffel visits the Cork slums, is depressed by what he sees there, thinks it over, and has the in-

mates of the lunatic asylum "gassed," the remains cremated, clean sheets put on the beds and the slum population, escorted by soldiers, moved in. Strangely enough they showed no gratitude. The picture of Prussianizing Ireland is an amusing one. But I would not have it believed that hot-headed *Sinn Feiners* or a few irreconcilable Irishmen in America represent the general Irish feeling in this war.

The war made the contest over the principle that no nation has any longer the right to make a war of offence against any other nation the greatest contest that the modern world has known, the most fateful contest of modern times. In the light of that great principle, there is not much difference between the pacifists and some *Sinn Feiners*. The pacifist ignores plain facts; the extreme *Sinn Feiner* lacks a sense of proportion. The pacifist ignores the fact that weakness

in defence of the world's peace or reliance upon words as a defence against brutes who rely upon brute strength is ignominious and stupid where it is not cowardly or pro-German. Pragmatically considered, judged by results, there is not much to choose between the pacifist and the pro-German. Each one wants immediate peace. As Germany wants immediate peace, the pacifist and the pro-German are playing Germany's game. Pragmatically considered, pacifist agitation and pro-German propaganda are approved by Germany as good because they advance Germany's interest. But while the effects of pacifism and pro-Germanism are similar, there is all the difference in the world between the motives of the extreme *Sinn Feiners*, who love Ireland and do not care anything about Germany, and the motives of the bribed pro-Germans who are really traitors to whatever coun-

try they are in. Until the German conspirators who have brought the misery of this war upon the world are defeated, and until the German people who have carried out the abominable and infamous slaughter-program of German autocrats are brought to realize that war does not pay, questions like home rule and the suffrage and other political and economic questions are comparative irrelevancies. Therefore I think of home rule chiefly as a step in the winning of the war.

The Dublin insurrection of May, 1916, was not generally popular in Ireland. If its leaders had been put in prison for the period of the war, the *Sinn Fein* movement, so far as it was merely revolutionary and not constructive, would, as a formidable movement, have ended a year ago. Because of the temperamental incapacity which unfortunately included complete lack of vision which characterized

the government that executed those sixteen men, after secret trials of small groups with many days' intervals between each trial, and their folly in arresting several thousand obviously innocent men in various parts of Ireland and deporting them to England, deep resentment at the English Government spread through Ireland; the leaders of the insurrection came to be thought of as martyrs; and what would have been regarded as a generally acceptable solution of the home rule question a year ago has now become simply impossible.

From the Irish point of view, as distinct from what I term the international view, the British Government in executing these sixteen leaders and putting their names on the roll of martyrdom has not injured the cause of home rule, while the men themselves by their ideality and death have enormously advanced it. Because of



it the national education of Ireland has gone on much faster and much further. What the British cabinet did not realize is the strain of ideality among the Irish people. It was still there, and so there was an outbreak like the Irish rebellion, which would have been impossible in England, and yet quite possible in France or Italy. Those leaders, full of enthusiasm about a something quite indefinable which they called "the Irish republic," made their appeal to the Irish enthusiasm for the ideal and the beautiful. Now they are dead, the appeal goes on all the more. But those leaders should be distinguished sharply from the very few pro-German Irish and from the ordinary ruck of politicians, past, present and to come, who think that hatred of England is statesmanship, and who have the one vulgarity in common, a belief in Irish hatred of the English and in English hatred of the Irish.

The English people do not hate the Irish. As a rule the English admire the Irish tremendously, though at times their admiration is mixed with apprehension or misgiving, not merely of the Irishman's intellect and brilliancy, but of his keen common sense and practical wisdom and the dramatic expression of Irish temperament. A muddling nation trying to govern one of the cleverest nations in the world. But it should not be forgotten that the Ulster business was never popular or widely approved in England.

From a Nationalist point of view, the Irish rebellion and the fate of its leaders have made the world richer. But I cannot forgive the government's lack of vision and the stupidity of that general who sent those idealists to their fate. Many in Ireland have come to feel that these Irish poets and teachers and writers were right, and no one can deny that they made

a world-shaking event. All the actors in the tragedy, including the military executioners, played their parts admirably. Nothing was wanting. It was curious and tragic how those in power unwittingly played up. The uprising was a wild thought, and it was a time in Ireland for wild thoughts. The executions were the only things wanting to make it a great and monumental event in Irish history. The folly of poets is sometimes wisdom, and the death- verdicts of the courts-martial and the wisdom of the English statesmen who approved the verdicts were altogether folly. What was a problem involving the highest statesmanship was handed over to soldiers.

Mr. Asquith must have been, and indeed was, profoundly shocked not merely by the horrors of the insurrection, but by the very fact of the insurrection. The pity was that he did not follow the ad-

vice of those who urged amnesty and concord. He candidly admitted that the old system of Irish government was no longer possible. But he followed the advice of "the men of profound wisdom and strong will" who "urged that crime is no less punishable because it amounts to treason" and that the leaders must be executed before grievances were to be removed. The Government were to knock the *Sinn Feiners* down with one hand and then pick them up with the other. Lincoln would not have followed that counsel. He did not follow it. We almost knew the very tone of the order he would have sent disapproving the death-sentences of the courts martial. Unfortunately the golden moment for reconciliation passed, and it has taken over a year for the real work of conciliation, by the convention, to be begun. The executions profoundly shocked England. They were

so out of date. Englishmen generally regretted them at the time and felt that the leaders had been treated with unnecessary harshness. I have no doubt that Mr. Asquith has since sincerely regretted the extreme measures taken.

So the uprising was an Irish event, almost the greatest in Irish history. Circumstances made the stage a great stage, with the whole world for spectators. The tragedy shocked the Irish public mind and at the same time healed the Irish *amour propre* of its cherished wounds. Since the uprising they can say "We have done it," and no one may gainsay them. They gained in their own consciousness and in every one else's. After that it was inevitable that sooner or later Sir Edward Carson and his followers both in England and Ireland should fall into line and the union of the North and South be accomplished; inevitable that Ireland and not

England should decide what sort of home rule would content Ireland. Between Ulster Unionists and the rest of Ireland there has always been a kind of sympathy, for both are men of war and both are rebels. There is no pacifism about them, and both are Irish in their feeling about England and Ireland. The old Fenian leader, John O'Leary, always said this. O'Leary called the Ulstermen patriots who wanted Ireland for themselves. Their anti-Popery he regarded as a passing aberration.

Ireland is the scene of Germany's one and only bloodless victory. Perhaps fifty thousand British soldiers locked up in Ireland; recruiting there almost at a standstill because of the history of the last year, involving a loss to the British army of perhaps another fifty thousand men, making a total loss of one hundred thousand from the firing line; the checking

of enlistment in Canada, and the contribution to the defeat of conscription in Australia — these constitute a German victory without the firing of a German gun or the loss of a German soldier. England is paying too costly a price for her past bungling in Ireland.

But I do not wish to imply that Ireland as a whole has been disloyal in the war. From the outbreak of the war until May, 1916, Ireland gave unmistakable signs of meeting England more than halfway. When the war broke out England appealed to Ireland and Ireland responded generously to the appeal. The two nations went to war together. But unfortunately for England, as well as for Ireland, Ireland's efforts have not yet secured that measure of generous response to which she felt she was entitled.

Before all the executions had been finished, Mr. Asquith hurried over to Dublin

and in the House of Commons on the 25th of May, 1916, Mr. Asquith said:

“Two main dominant impressions . . . were left on my mind. The first was the breakdown of the existing machinery of Irish Government; and the next was the strength and depth, and I might almost say, I think without exaggeration, the universality, of the feeling in Ireland that we have now a unique opportunity for a new departure for the settlement of outstanding problems, and for a joint and combined effort to obtain agreement as to the way in which the Government of Ireland is for the future to be carried on. As I said, and I repeat, the moment is felt in Ireland to be peculiarly opportune, and one great reason that has led to that opinion both there and here is our experience in the War. Irishmen of all creeds and classes, north, south, east and west, have responded with alacrity and with self-devotion to the demands of the cause which appeals to them. They have shed, they are shedding today, their blood; giving the best of all they had, sacrificing



what they prized most, without stint and without reserve, in the trenches and on the battlefields, which will be forever consecrated to the memory of Ireland, as of Great Britain and of the Empire at large. Sir, can we who represent Great Britain, can they who represent Ireland, tolerate the prospect that when this war is over, when we have by our joint efforts and sacrifices, as we hope and believe we shall, achieved our end, here at home Irishmen should be arrayed against one another in the most tragic and the most debasing of all conflicts — internecine domestic strife? I say to the House of Commons and to the country and to the Empire that the thought is inconceivable. That can never be. It would be a confession of bankruptcy, not only of statesmanship, but of patriotism.”

Mr. Lloyd George, then a member of the Government under Mr. Asquith, later undertook to obtain an agreement between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. Although both Sir Edward Carson and Mr. John Redmond each made sacrifices, the settle-

ment agreed upon, fortunately for Ireland as well as for England, for it was not satisfactory and would not have been a permanent one, was thrown over by the Government upon the demand of certain well known forces then dominant in the Cabinet. That surrender of Mr. Asquith and his associates was, as it has turned out, a fortunate thing for Ireland and the Empire, for the patched-up settlement satisfied no party. It would not have brought peace, and would not have endured.

### III

#### AN ENGLISH VIEW OF THE INSURRECTION AND HOME RULE

THE following English statements are from an interesting book *Dublin — Explorations and Reflections*, published just recently (Dublin. Maunsel & Co., 1917). The author gives an interesting and vivid account of what he conceives to be the average Englishman's views about Ireland. He approaches the subject with an open and disinterested mind and with a candor and honesty that I like to think are characteristic of the liberty-loving English people. The facts stated by him and his conclusion that Dublin is one of the strongholds of liberty, are so inter-

esting that I need not apologize for quoting rather fully from his book:

“The murder of Mr. Sheehy-Skeffington and his companions was a sheer stroke of ill-fortune for England for which it is difficult to see how she can justly be abused. The actual culprit, moreover, was an Irishman. But having suffered the disaster of this ghastly deed one would have thought those responsible for general questions of policy would have paused and taken thought. Not so. The methods employed in suppressing the Rebellion of 1916 were precisely similar to the methods employed in suppressing the Rebellions of 1798 and 1803. The military mind had apparently remained impervious to new ideas throughout the intervening century. In spite of all the harm done in the past to Anglo-Irish relations by the making of martyrs and national heroes, more martyrs and more national heroes were made, and the prestige of England was permanently lowered in the eyes of America and of the neutral world. She has never since been able to regain the

position then lost. If the murder of Mr. Sheehy-Skeffington was simply a piece of bad luck for England, for the attempts made to hush-up that tragic business she had no one but herself to blame.

“These attempts were not successful, they were persisted in for a week or two, then dropped, under pressure, in such a manner as gravely to shake public confidence in the administration. There was something bungling and ignoble in the whole proceeding. England behaved like a good-hearted, respectable rich man put in a false and ignominious position by a momentary lack of moral courage. When the moment was passed the amends were adequate and dignified, but they came too late. What a contrast to all this seemed the behaviour of the rebel leaders! They were foolish, insane as it appears to us, but insanely honest and sincere. Nothing ignoble or mean or (according to their lights) ungenerous, has ever been proved against them. The inevitable reaction in England in their favour when the truth gradually emerged was very strong, and its influence is still felt. The whole epi-

sode of the Rebellion has indeed struck through the black fog of politics which formerly interposed itself between our eyes and Ireland, and in an unforgettable lightning flash has shown us Ireland's bleeding heart and our own the sword transfixing it. And it did more, that terrible revealing lightning—it showed us ourselves as we never thought to see ourselves. It is an awkward moment for a nation which has been publicly thanking God that it is not as other nations are, that it is no tyrant but the protector of the oppressed, no wicked Prussian militarist but the enemy of militarism, when it suddenly becomes suspect of the very crimes which it has set out with a flourish of trumpets to punish other races for committing. At the outbreak of the revolt we held all the cards, the sympathy was all with us. But not even the Germans could have played a hand more clumsily. After two years of war even the man in the street was capable of reflecting that there must be 'something behind' the outbreak. And from this it was but a step to speculating as to what that

something could be. In a little while, the alarming news came through that the executed rebels were not mere thieves and murderers in the pay of Germany, but schoolmasters and poets of blameless private lives, idealists, abstemious, self-denying men, deeply religious. What was the cause which inspired them? Who was oppressing these people? Had Ireland then really a grievance and, if so, what was it? . . .

“After the rising had been crushed my country presented herself to my mind as a rather pompous old lady, who, whilst giving herself tremendous airs of virtue, is suddenly struck in the face by a small boy who has been stood in the corner by her for a longer time than flesh and blood will endure. The old lady’s consternation is pitiable. She may be pompous and absurd, however, but at least she knows how to spank. Presently, she spansk so hard, so mercilessly, that all the onlookers, and even some of the members of her own family cry out ‘for shame!’ But she takes no heed of them.

“Whatever the Easter Rebellion may

or may not have done for Ireland, I think it has helped to modify the attitude of a portion of the British public towards the war. The necessity to win through to an honourable peace has not been weakened by it; but the old confidence that we were the champions of small nations, that ours was a 'Holy War,' that we could never succumb to 'militarism' has received a shock. Englishmen began to realize that not only were their own personal liberties for which their forefathers struggled and died being taken from them, but that their country was actually regarded as the foreign tyrant by a large proportion of the indigenous population of the sister isle. It would not surprise me if, when the war is over, the Dublin revolt were held to have done something to bring peace nearer, simply by helping to bring about the necessary 'change of heart.'

"One effect, at least, of the Dublin Insurrection is beyond dispute. It made Ireland 'actual' for the average Englishman — as actual say as Serbia or Montenegro; for a week or two, as actual as Belgium. Its Rebellion, however keenly



we might resent it, had some of the crudity and brilliance of a work of youthful genius, and a marked capacity for touching the imaginations even of the unimaginative. And it had a strange quality of glamour, the glamour which attaches itself almost immediately to events which are destined to live in history. It made English people realize (for the first time in many cases) that the nation which could produce men capable of such a forlorn hope, whose unhappy circumstances urged its idealists to offer up their lives in the vain chance of bettering them, must be one of rare interest — a nation with an unconquerable soul . . .” (pages 13–17).

And again, this courageous and candid Englishman says:

“If I am unable to grow enthusiastic about Gaelic, I have at least been profoundly impressed by those of the ‘Irish’ Irish whom I have encountered in Dublin. The most noticeable thing about them is that they are good people, moved by noble impulses, austere and simple in their lives like men and women who have seen a vision

and are filled with a deep purpose. Mistaken they may be in their political ideals (though I confess I do not believe it), but their sincerity shines out like a bright star in a dark night of corruption. It was from people of this kind that the leaders of the recent rebellion were drawn and from whom any further human sacrifices which the gods may demand of Ireland will doubtless be taken. It is not a pleasant thought for an Englishman; but then there is scarcely a page of Irish history which can provide pleasant thoughts for an Englishman. Perhaps that is why, with the strong commonsense which is said to distinguish his race, no Englishman ever reads one.

“As for the ‘moderate’ man in Irish politics, I confess he seems to me to be much the same as the moderate man everywhere else. The moderate man is always prone to compromise, to engage in political buying and selling. In Ireland he seems to be particularly adept at selling: perhaps that is the reason why he invariably prospers.

“Throughout my stay in Dublin I have

been unable to resist the conviction that it is the 'Irish' Irish who hate us (or at least our Government) most bitterly whom we English ought most truly to respect. The clean fire of their loathing for oppression is just the fire which so much needs re-kindling in our own hearts. If we could but join them in the real 'Holy War' not only would freedom come to Ireland, but to England herself might be restored all those qualities which in the past have made her great" (pages 189-191).

And again he says:

"The quickest way to the complete re-union of Ireland with the Empire seems to be through an exceptionally generous and comprehensive measure of Home Rule. *I cannot imagine any appeal to the generosity of the Irish people being made in vain:* the way to arouse the generous emotions of others is, assuredly, to be generous oneself. I do not believe that the England which the average Irishman sees bears any relation whatever to the true England. I shall never believe, in spite of

recent history, that my country is really militarist at heart. There is, however, a certain type of narrow-minded Englishmen, kept exclusively for export purposes, who goes about the world like a misguided fanatic, dropping the dead weight of the white man's burden on the already bowed necks of those unfortunate 'backward' races who are too weak to protest. This type of Englishman has for centuries made the mistake of dumping himself and his burdens on to Ireland. Ireland, however, though poor in cash is rich in spirit. There has been trouble, and there always will be trouble until the export to Ireland of British Junkers is once and for all prohibited. When that happens, I see no reason why the friendship between England and Ireland, a friendship based on mutual understanding, should not ripen apace. Both countries will have much to gain by it, but of the two I think England will gain more. The Irish possess essential qualities which the English lack. They are to my mind the salt of the British peoples, the invaluable leaven without which the Anglo-Saxon would grow ever more lumpy" (pages 265-266).

The author goes on to compare the relations of England and Ireland to that of a husband and wife, the husband having been neglectful of the wife's proper claims, and the wife taking advantage of a moment when the husband was himself embarrassed to assert her claims. The case goes to court, the lawyers go on talking, bargains and settlements are agreed to, pledged words broken, the wife grows more haggard and weary, and then at last the young men who love her dearly and who never could understand the law and who cannot bear the delays, burst out with a sudden madness:

“With bombs and rifles in their hands they march to the doors of the Great Court in which so many millions of words have been uttered and so little accomplished. They create, this little band, a tremendous disturbance with their bombs and their explosions; they startle all the Judges out of their seven senses; they kill,

alas, a few of the loyal servants of the Court; and they are killed themselves. But they are glad to die. They were tired of all the writing and all the talking. They wanted to *do* something.

“When the commotion calms down, and the lady’s younger and too ardent supporters have all been executed and imprisoned the Court continues its deliberations. It continues them still; but it seems to me that things are not the same. The Rebels, pathetic and hopeless as their outbreak was, have achieved something. The Judges are nervous and jangled, a little doubtful of their omniscience. The explosion of the bombs was uncomfortably near their own noses. Moreover, the disturbance has called the attention of the whole world to the dilatoriness and incompetence with which the Irish case has been conducted. The Court, and all the counsel engaged on both sides are suspect. On the rich husband’s side the attention of many of his relatives (particularly of his grandsons and great-nephews) has for the first time been attracted to his treatment of his unhappy wife. They consider it an

abomination, and will no longer support him in his meanness. And on the lady's side, the outburst of the young men has brought about a still more widespread distrust of the lawyers who, advancing always to the struggle with their drawn salaries in their hands, have nothing but the extraction of a certain amount of alimony in the form of Land Acts (perilously like bribes) to show for their endeavours. Yes: on the side of the Dark Rosalsen, the hearts of many of her supporters go out now to the fools who had no salary at all, but who, nevertheless, in a frenzy of generous impatience, laid down their lives" (pages 270-271).

Padraic H. Pearse, whose name will be always remembered as the leader of the revolt, has been presented in such various aspects to the American public that it will be useful to call attention here to his collected works now in course of publication of which the first volume has lately appeared. Not a single thought can be found that is unworthy or ignoble.

It was well said in a recent brief Irish review of this interesting book: "Probably no more selfless spirit ever broke itself against the might of the Iron Age than this man's spirit which was lit up by love of children and country, a dreamer with his heart in the Golden Age. This man, much more simple than Thomas McDonagh or Joseph Plunkett, had a much greater and more original personality, and as we read this book we understand his pre-eminence among the revolutionaries. The fact was he had infinite faith, he was selfless, and therefore he was a moral rock to lean on. As we read this book, with its gentleness and its idealism, and think of the storm he raised, we are reminded of the scriptural picture of a little child leading the lion, only in this case it was in no idyllic fields the child was, but it was hallooing the beast on to rend its enemies. Undoubtedly Padraic



Pearse was a powerful and unique personality, and the publication of this volume in which is collected his best writing will give him that place in Irish literature which he is entitled to by merit, and which would be justly his quite apart from the place in Irish history he has gained by his astonishing enterprise."

One of Pearse's poems has this:

"I have squandered the splendid years that  
the Lord God gave to my youth  
In attempting impossible things, deeming  
them alone worth the toil.  
Was it folly or grace? Not men shall  
judge me, but God.

. . .

And:

"I have heard in my heart, that a  
man shall scatter, not hoard,  
Shall do the deed of today, nor take thought  
of tomorrow's teen,  
Shall not bargain or huxter with God."

That was the faith of Padraic Pearse.

## IV

### THE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW

**T**HE feeling of Americans generally as to Ireland's right to home rule cannot be better expressed than in the words of William James in his memorable address upon the unveiling of the monument in Boston to Robert Gould Shaw. At the conclusion of that address he said:

“Democracy is still upon its trial. The civic genius of our people is its only bulwark, and neither laws nor monuments, neither battleships nor public libraries, nor great newspapers nor booming stocks; neither mechanical invention nor political adroitness, nor churches nor universities nor civil service examinations can save us from degeneration if the inner mystery be lost. That mystery, at once the secret

and the glory of our English-speaking race, consists in nothing but two common habits, two inveterate habits carried into public life,—habits so homely that they lend themselves to no rhetorical expression, yet habits more precious, perhaps, than any that the human race has gained. They can never be too often pointed out or praised. One of them is *the habit of trained and disciplined good temper towards the opposite party when it fairly wins its innings*. It was by breaking away from this habit that the Slave States nearly wrecked our Nation. The other is that of *fierce and merciless resentment toward every man or set of men who break the public peace*. By holding to this habit the free States saved her life.”

The people of the United States feel that neither Ulster nor those of the Tories in England who financed and backed Ulster's ante-war pronouncements, exercised any trained or disciplined good temper towards nationalist Ireland “when it had fairly won its innings.” They also feel

that the Ulstermen and their English supporters rightly merited that "fierce and merciless resentment toward every man or set of men who break the public peace."

To thoughtful observers in this country, Ireland seems politically to be somewhat backward. But there has been a great deal of political education recently outside of the regular parliamentary party. The Irish volunteers encouraged a hopeful spirit of self-respect and discipline. There is good material for a real constitutional settlement. The things that were to be feared were secret agreements, intrigues and weakness. But the days of those things have passed. There must be no repetitions of the weakness and timidity that prompted the Parliamentary party to agree to partition twice. The convention now sitting in Dublin has a unique opportunity for great service. The world will applaud a settlement that

is a real solution. But a division of Ireland, even of two or three counties, will be regarded as an Ulster victory, and will be regarded by Irishmen all over the world as another trick. Anything that even looks like an Ulster victory will be bad.

It is likely that few people in England realize to what extent the Irish question interests all sections and all varieties of people in the United States. In villages and cities in the west and south, as well as in New England and the Middle Atlantic states, the question of Irish government in its broad lines is remarkably well known. Americans sympathize with Ireland because they feel that she had "fairly won her innings" and had been deprived of her innings. They feel that the resistance by Ulster to the home rule act would never have gone to the extent that it did but for the encouragement of a small

group of powerful English Tories and the support of certain powerful English financial interests, who, wishing to prevent the carrying out of English radical reforms, looked about for a way of defeating the Liberal party, and hit upon Sir Edward Carson and the Ulster question as the rock on which to break the Liberal party or drive it from power. Ulster supplied the familiar "moral issue." Old and dying feelings of religious bigotry were revived. The Tories and the financiers backed and financed Ulster, and Sir Edward Carson argued and managed the case for them, not because they loved Ulster or were really afraid of religious persecution, but because they wanted to get the Liberals out and the Tories in. The result is known: the rejection of the home rule act by the Lords; the House of Lords act; long delay; then when the House of Lords act had become a law, the Ulster volun-

teers, Sir Edward Carson's threats, disaffection in the army, the Curragh treason, Sir Edward Carson's visit to the kaiser, open threats of rebellion in Ulster by Sir Edward Carson and others in and out of Ulster; the Buckingham Palace conference and its failure; and then the war. Many people forget that the Buckingham Palace conference over the home rule question, which resulted in a deadlock, ended July 24-25, 1914, and that England and Germany were at war August 4, 1914. It is believed in the United States that Germany would not have forced the war if she had believed that England would come in; that Germany felt that England would not come in largely because of the Ulster business, and of what was believed in Germany to be general treason and disaffection in the English army; and that therefore the Carsons, the Lansdownes, the London-

derrys, the Selbournes and the others have a heavy responsibility for the war. If that belief is unfounded, still it is a belief.

Then even when the war broke out, Mr. Asquith and his associates put the old patch-work home rule act on the statute books indeed, but provided that it should not go into effect until after the war, and then only with amendments; giving, as was said, a promissory note payable after death, giving with one hand and taking away with the other. But at last English opinion is awake, the English sense of justice and fair play is aroused. England has done her best to make this last effort a success. The amnesty of all the Irish political prisoners, which preceded the constitution of the convention, was wise statesmanship.



## V

### SOME IRISH OPINIONS

**O**PINIONS in Ireland and in England differ as to the outcome of the convention. Some are hopeful, others pessimistic, but none indifferent. I could quote from scores of letters from prominent and influential Englishmen and Irishmen, nearly every one giving a different shade of opinion. One does not see how anything can reconcile Ulster and the South; another argues that *Sinn Fein* has split if not ruined the Nationalist party; another that any problem founded on a political-cum-religious rock is difficult of solution. Others have no patience with *Sinn Fein* and one rather bitterly

writes that it is *Sinn Fein über Allies* with them and that they would "scrap any flag, including the Stars and Stripes, except the German Flag." Another hopes that "things will settle down without any further bloodshed," but doubts it, and adds that "Little is to be expected from fanaticism except blood."

One of the most distinguished and best-informed statesmen and publicists in England who knows Ireland thoroughly is not sanguine as to the success of the convention, adding: "for the Ulster obstructionists, having been foolishly told by the Government that they would have a virtual veto, are likely to be dogged in refusing concessions. However, we must hope for the best." Others believe that nothing but a representative convention would be able to produce a result and have it accepted.

But all recognize the vital importance

of a generally satisfactory solution by the convention. The following from an article in *The Contemporary Review*, August, 1917, by Mr. J. W. Good, on *The Spirit of Belfast* is not pessimistic but does not dodge the difficulties of the situation:

“If both Ulster parties react in the same fashion when England rubs them the wrong way they display also, as against *franc-tireurs* and unauthorized combatants, the freemasonry of professional soldiers. Sir Horace Plunkett — to whom we owe the saying ‘a man in Ireland without a party is like a dog in a tennis court’ — had the melancholy satisfaction of proving the truth of his own epigram, when, on suspicion of a weakening in his opposition to Home Rule, the Ulster Unionists, who for years had been calling on the Nationalists to bow down to him as the ideal statesman, bluntly told him to get back to his milk-cans and churns and leave politics to those who understood them. There was an even more glaring instance in the early

days of the war when some well-intentioned folk sought to organize in Belfast a Home Defence Corps on the English principle, free from any tinge of politics. The Unionists immediately declared that the proper place for any man who had not signed the Covenant was not in some 'fancy' corps but in the Irish National Volunteers; the Nationalists were equally insistent that if any one outside their organization wanted to shoulder a rifle he should do so as an Ulster Volunteer. One is sometimes tempted to think that the paupers in Lady Gregory's comedy, who wrangle so venomously and yet are not happy away from one another, symbolize perfectly the spirit of political Ulster.

"The better one knows the North of Ireland the less one is inclined to accept the 'two nations' theory which figures so much in current controversy. It is merely the old fallacy of the opposition of Celt and Saxon, which, as Lecky showed a generation ago, bears no relation to the facts of the Irish situation. . . . The error into which most outsiders fall is that they contrast the Ulster Unionist with the Na-

tionalist of the South and West, and naturally fail to find much in common between them. As a matter of fact, in temperament and outlook the Belfast Loyalist, as he loves to describe himself, is farther apart from the Unionist of Cork or Limerick than the Protestant of the Shankill is from the Catholic of the Falls. His quarrel with his Nationalist neighbours is less a clash between races than an embittered family feud. Only near relations have the same uncanny knowledge of each other's weak points, and the same skill in getting their thrusts home between the joints of their opponent's armour. There is a story of a Jewish Lord Mayor of Belfast who in a time of civil commotion tried to make peace between the hostile mobs, and was extinguished by a shout from the crowd: 'What right have you to interfere in a fight between Christians?' Unfortunately, some one is always ready to interfere, and it is this knowledge that keeps the rival parties from arriving at an agreement — were it only an agreement to differ.

“It is generally assumed that the events

of recent years have made the task of reconciliation in Ulster almost impossible. The manœuvre battles of the old days were bad enough, but the rival forces are now entrenched in Hindenburg lines which no bombardment of facts or arguments can breach. There are plenty of facts, unfortunately, to support this view, but the rule, as strangers imagine it to be, that everything in Ireland goes by contraries, seems to me to apply here. Having lived in Ulster for years before Sir Edward Carson blossomed forth as 'a leader of revolt,' I am not impressed by the case which special pleaders in both camps make that old hostilities were dying out till the present agitation gave them a new lease of life. Unionists accept that theory because it enables them to contend that there was no real demand for Home Rule; Nationalists use it as a stick for the backs of Tories, *who exploited Ulster antagonisms in the hope of overthrowing a hated Radical Government.* As a matter of fact, the taint was in the blood, though its presence might not have been so plain to a casual eye; and, personally, I believe it is

not altogether a bad thing that it should have been driven to the surface in baleful eruption. Without the eruption the disease might have been ignored till it was too late; it is now clear, even to those who professed to regard the spread of the infection as a sign of health and energy, that A REMEDY MUST BE FOUND, if the whole body politic is not to rot into corruption."

I regret that Dr. Douglas Hyde is not a member of the convention. He was one of the organizers of and for over twenty years the president of the Gaelic League. That League and Sir Horace Plunkett's Irish Agricultural Organization Society were the two great organizations in Ireland that knew neither politics nor creed; in whose work Unionist and Nationalist and *Sinn Feiner* and Catholic and Protestant could and did take part side by side. Hyde resigned the presidency of the Gaelic League when it became political. He made the great refusal of

not consenting to continue at the head of the body, to which he had given the best years of his life, after it had been captured by the extremists and made in part into a political organization. Douglas Hyde, William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and George Russell, in literature and the drama, and Sir Hugh Lane in art, have been the leaders in the preparation for home rule and have worked to enrich the life of the nation.

I also regret that Standish O'Grady, that great-hearted, wise, tolerant Irishman, the noblest of them all, is not in the convention. He is a member of no party, because he is above all parties.

It is generally regretted that the *Sinn Feiners* remained out of the convention. The *Sinn Feiners* holding out against the convention deprive it of the services of men like Professor John MacNeill, one of the most acute minds in Ireland, a man who



has never been pro-German or in league with any Germans, a man always capable of being reasoned with; and of men like Gavan Duffy and Colonel Maurice Moore, who are reasonable and not really fanatics. While these men have not gone into the convention, my hope is that they will give aid to members of the convention who will press on the convention a good measure, and if a good measure is agreed upon I believe that the majority of the *Sinn Feiners* will accept it. That is apparently the policy of the *Sinn Feiners* — to remain outside and spur the convention by extreme demands, but to accept the agreement if the system of government is a good one and includes Ulster. While the bodies whose representatives form the largest part of the convention membership are no longer representative themselves of political opinion, and while the chairmen of county councils are not by

character or education fitted to discuss constitutional questions, the hope for the convention is that a few intelligent men who know what they want will form a solid *bloc* and reinforce each other and overcome the rest by sheer force of argument as to the justice, the necessity, the policy, both from an Irish and from an imperial point of view, of a complete, satisfactory, acceptable settlement that will include all Ireland.

A few months ago the question was, what kind of folk the Ulster government would send, whether they would be moderate and reasonable or "die-hards." If the latter were to be sent, and if it appeared that they only came in to separate Ulster, then, as a well-informed friend of mine wrote, "the convention had better dissolve at once, because partition will be no settlement." But now the question has changed. Sir Ed-

ward Carson is no longer the idol of Ulster. His name is not likely to be enshrined in history in connection with any great or beneficent, social, economic or political reform. He is more likely to be associated with one of the most sinister episodes in the history of England and Ireland. In fact Ulster might be pointed to as a victim of the power of over-suggestion in politics. Over-suggestion and outer-suggestion may be said to have passed into auto-suggestion. But thanks to liberal injections of the anti-toxin of common sense and cold reason, the fever has died down. Ulster is cool and rational again. She has waked up. Ulster will make the sacrifice of her pride and will take the risk of what some Ulstermen fear may be a peril to their business interests. She will place the greater interest above her own pride and fears. She will take the imperial and not the

parochial course. She has nothing to fear, neither Popery, the cry of which was absurd, nor confiscation or spoliation, which were equally absurd, nor lack of business ability in Ireland outside of Ulster. The claim that Ulster must have guaranties was always an absurdity. The patched-up home rule act now upon the statute books of Great Britain guards in explicit terms against any possible dangers to religious liberty and to equality before the law in a way that probably no other constitution does. And if that act, loaded down with guaranties as it is, does not satisfy Ulster, let guaranties be piled upon guaranties until Ulster must admit that she is satisfied.

I feel confident that England now realizes that if the work of the convention is bungled and a satisfactory measure is not passed, nationalist Ireland will settle back into a cold anger and that all the work of

the past twenty-five years to bring about friendly relations between Protestant and Catholic will be lost. Seldom has a finer opportunity for vision and courage come to a body of delegates than to those who will control the work of the convention. A wise and eloquent Irish friend of mine wrote me recently: "The Irish national mood is today like molten metal, and unless some skilful political artificer can seize the glowing mass and press it into the ideal mould, it will cool in a mould and mood which promise little good."

Many *Sinn Feiners* advocate "an independent Ireland." If by that they mean a republic, they will, in my judgment, get it only as a sequel of a revolution in England, in which no one believes. On the other hand, Americans should not be misled by the common charges against the *Sinn Feiners*. THE MAIN BODY OF THEM ARE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMERS. The

Parliamentary party has not troubled itself much during the last twenty years about the young men who wanted temperance, co-operation, education and the like. And unless the Parliamentary party moves along better and sounder lines than in the past, it can never lead the people. It may machine them, but that will not mend matters.

I believe that colonial home rule would amply satisfy nineteen-twentieths of the people of Ireland. Wise and liberal Irishmen do not care to see a republic preached, lest when real grievances are settled the demand for a republic should persist and throw things into confusion. If a satisfactory home rule measure with Ulster included is produced by the convention, their judgment is that only the few hotheads would continue to demand a republic. But the Nationalists

and the majority of the *Sinn Feiners* believe that it would be better for Ireland not to be distracted by any further politics, if the convention once gives a decent settlement.

The choice of Sir Horace Plunkett as chairman of the convention, and the fact that George W. Russell (A.E.) is one of the leading members of the convention and was a member of the committee to suggest a chairman, have convinced me that the work of the convention will be honest and sound. Plunkett's chairmanship is popular in Ireland. People know that he is straight and wants to bring about a settlement. He is a good Irishman, and one of the sanest and fairest men I have ever known. The secretary of the convention is Sir Francis Hopwood, and it is significant that one of the first requests made of him was for information in regard to the

procedure adopted by the convention that drew up the constitution for the union of South Africa.

A hopeful sign also is that Mr. Erskine Childers is on the secretariat. He is one of the clearest thinkers and best writers on home rule questions in Ireland or England. His book *The Framework of Home Rule* (1911) is, apart from the eloquent article of George Russell's reprinted in this book, the only piece of high politics on the subject I know. The Government allowed him to come back from France on application for his services. I am told that so far the meetings of the convention have been in good spirit.

And now I am leaving the region of fact and coming to that of prophecy. I believe the Convention will be a success. The leaders are more reasonable than their followers. Meeting together and talking without the newspapers being able to get



at them, will lead them to agree upon what is right. I am satisfied that the majority of the convention will see to it that there shall not come out of the convention any reasonable grounds for belief that Ulster has won, that Ulster has had her way, that secret diplomacy has again come out on top, that back-stairs intrigue and private understandings are not over, but that broad statesmanship and a genuine desire to promote the interests of Ireland and of England have been the guiding motive of the convention. I believe that the wretched history of the last few years will be reversed by the action of the convention. I believe that the work of the convention will be approved by the country, that the convention will give genuine home rule to an undivided Ireland, and that public opinion in the United States and in Canada and Australia, as well as in Ireland and England, will applaud and re-

joice at its work as a genuine and honest settlement. I know that to be the desire of men like Sir Horace Plunkett and George W. Russell, and if their views prevail they will have done not merely lasting good for Ireland, but will have delivered a powerful blow for the defeat of the common enemy of all.

The following is from one of the best-informed of the young Irish writers:

“The present Irish situation will naturally seem confused at the distance. The fact is, however, that the Irish situation is rapidly clarifying itself, and we are a good deal nearer to a united country than we have been in the whole of the later period. For the Parliamentary party it is, of course, a land-slide: it is so for more than the party, for the Unionists even will come sliding down the slippery slope and be clasped to our bosoms. . . .

“It has been said, against the Convention (which is holding its second meeting today), that it has no mandate from the country. That is not the fact. It has,

unexpressed indeed, but very definitely, a mandate. When one gathers together a number of facts there gathers round them an air, an atmosphere, a kind of psychological fringe, and the man who can interpret this brings home the bacon. Around the grouped facts of our convention there is such a fringe. The country has declared for and against partition, it has declared for and against a republic, it has declared for and against the old home rule bill which is on the statute book: it has mentioned, without much emphasis, it is true, but without any antagonism, the idea of colonial self-government. All the other ideas have been advanced and have been attacked. Colonial home rule has been advanced, and has not been attacked by any one. That is the psychological fact which surrounds the other facts, and the absolute mandate of the country to the men gathered in the Regent House (that last infirmary for noble minds) is, Let ye talk about colonial home rule, and if ye don't talk about that then shut your gobs and go home — Gob, by the bye, means in the Irish the beak of a bird."

A solution that deals honestly and justly with the financial problems and gives home rule to a united Ireland, will be welcomed not merely in Ireland but in the United States. Those interested in Irish affairs in the United States have not been appeased by the mere appointment of the convention, for it has come late and after many sad blunders. They are awaiting its verdict.

## VI

GEORGE W. RUSSELL (A. E.)

THE author of *Thoughts for a Convention* is a great Irishman. In him are combined in a unique degree many talents and accomplishments. He is an artist of charm and originality, a poet of deep vision and beauty, an eloquent speaker, a prose writer of great distinction, an expert agricultural and coöperative organizer and the editor of *The Irish Homestead*, a weekly agricultural paper, one of the best published in English. Like his friend and my friend William Butler Yeats, he delights to discover and encourage young poets, writers and artists. He has been a leading spirit for years in the

Irish Agricultural Organization Society, he is an intimate friend and the righthand helper of Sir Horace Plunkett in all his work, and a force in contemporary Ireland.<sup>1</sup> His last work *The National Being* (Maunsel, Dublin 1916; New York, The Macmillan Co.) combines fine vision and practical thought. A list of his creative works and his other writings on economics are given in a note below.

Russell is an Ulster man and a Protestant, but a member of no political party. It is safe to say that he knows Ulster as

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<sup>1</sup> He is the author of *Homeward: Songs by the Way*, 1894. *The Future of Ireland* and *The Awakening of the Fires*, 1897. *Ideals in Ireland: Priest or Hero?*, 1897. *The Earth Breath*, 1897. *Literary Ideals in Ireland*, 1899 (in collaboration). *Ideals in Ireland*, 1901 (in collaboration). *The Nuts of Knowledge*, 1903. *Controversy in Ireland*, 1904. *The Divine Vision*, 1904. *The Mask of Apollo*, 1904. *New Poems*, 1904 (edited).

well as if not better than Sir Edward Carson does. Indeed Sir Edward Carson is not an Ulsterman at all. Russell's *Thoughts for a Convention* has had a great effect on Southern Unionist and Ulster opinion. It first appeared in *The Irish Times*, a Unionist paper, and has been several times reprinted. It is the best, the sanest, the most unbiased and at the same time the most eloquent discussion of the general principles underlying the Irish home rule question that I have seen.

Seldom have I read a more eloquent and

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*By Still Waters*, 1906. *Some Irish Essays*, 1906. *Deirdre (A play)*, 1907. *The Hero in Man*, 1909. *The Renewal of Youth*, 1911. *The United Irishwomen*, 1912 (in collaboration). *Co-operation and Nationality*, 1912. *The Rural Community*, 1913. *Collected Poems*, 1913. *Gods of War and other Poems*, 1915. *Imaginations and Reveries*, 1915; and the last and one of his best books, *The National Being* (1916).

persuasive discussion of a great political question. Plato could not have done it better in the Athens of his day. His statement of the history, the aims and the achievements of the Unionists, the Nationalists and the *Sinn Feiners* is sympathetic and just. He explains from full knowledge that the usual charge of insincerity against the constitutional Nationalists is unjust, and he gives them full credit for the many good measures won by them in their long contest. But he points out the weakness of a constitutional party that finds itself between two extreme parties, each of which desires a settlement in accordance with fundamental principles. His exposition of the Ulster feeling is put in a way that ought to touch the pride of, and make a strong appeal to all Irishmen of every party and creed. How thin and poor, in comparison with his fine and elevated reasoning, are the usual constitu-



tional arguments! His demonstration of the impracticability and impossibility of a completely independent Ireland is conclusive, and, I believe, will be agreed to by the majority of the extremists themselves. His demonstration of the necessity of a complete separation of religion from politics is equally conclusive. His argument as to the profound wisdom of a real settlement, in the interests not merely of Ireland or Great Britain, but of the whole Empire, is as eloquent as it is wise.

I might, if I were in the convention, not hold out for the complete exclusion of Irish members from Westminster. And I cannot agree to his dictum that it was the question of Alsace-Lorraine that led to "the inevitable war" (paragraph 17).

The editor of *The Irish Times* is quoted as having said that Russell had shaken the faith of Unionists in their innermost tabernacles. It is regarded in Ireland as re-

markable that such articles should have appeared in a Unionist paper without a single letter of protest, whereas *The Irish Times* readers are as a rule only too ready to rush into print protesting that they will never have it, and so forth.

In *The Nineteenth Century* for July, 1917, Professor A. V. Dicey, the veteran opponent of home rule in any form for thirty years, had an article entitled *Is it Wise to Establish Home Rule Before the End of the War?* The Professor referred sympathetically to Russell's pamphlet and even wrote with unusual courtesy and moderation, for him, of the *Sinn Feiners*. Of Russell's pamphlet he said:

“An Englishman interested in the home rule question should read with care *Thoughts for a Convention* by A. E. (Mr. George Russell), Maunsel and Co., Dublin. I have no doubt that A. E. disagrees with all my conclusions, but his Memorandum,

though written from an entirely Irish point of view, is characterized by a noble spirit, and brings before Englishmen feelings, thoughts, and sometimes facts with regard to Ireland which they are apt to overlook."

Twenty thousand copies of the pamphlet were sold within a few days after its publication, which means something in Ireland, and *The Irish Times* itself has a large circulation.

This would be no place, even if I were able to do it, to discuss the details of the problems before the convention. I can do no better than to refer to Erskine Childers' *The Framework of Home Rule* (London: Edward Arnold, 1911) for a complete discussion of Irish parliamentary history, the Grattan Parliament, the Union, Canada and Ireland, Australia and Ireland, South Africa and Ireland, and their analogies, the Ireland of today, the

framework of home rule, the Union finance, financial independence, land purchase, and a sketch of an Irish constitution. The lamented Professor T. M. Kettle's little book *Home Rule Finance, an Experiment in Justice* (Dublin, 1911) and his admirably-tempered book *The Open Secret of Ireland* (1912) are also instructive. He had been a member of Parliament, and at the outbreak of the war was a professor in the Irish National University. He entered the army, and, like the brave Major William Redmond, was killed a few months ago, leading his Irish soldiers.

An interesting discussion of *What Ireland Wants* appeared not long ago in the *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1917, by Sir J. R. O'Connell. He considers some of the fundamental problems confronting the convention and the outlook after legisla-

tive autonomy has been conferred upon Ireland. It is an article that will repay reading.

The article by Professor Dicey in *The Nineteenth Century*, July, 1917, above referred to, is a typical example of lawyers' special pleading. He argues at some length that the establishment of any form of home rule in Ireland would, during the continuance of the war, be a cause of weakness to Great Britain and the British Empire. But the Professor seems to forget that Bismarck brought about the union of the German kingdoms into an empire during a war, that Lincoln emancipated the slaves in the middle of the Civil War, and that neither Bismarck nor Lincoln was influenced by constitutional arguments or lawyers' fears. The Professor gives an interesting sketch of the three parties now in Ireland — the Constitutional or Parlia-

mentary Nationalists, the *Sinn Feiners* and the Unionists, and he frankly admits that every Irish party prefers that Ireland, whatever her relation to Great Britain, should be administratively governed as one country. The Professor gives a peculiar and even amusing explanation of the failure of the Asquith-Lloyd George attempt at reconciliation and settlement in 1916, saying that "Englishmen cannot care ardently about more than one important matter at a time." He admits that there is a great change of feeling among Englishmen toward the demand of Irishmen for home rule, and gives his case entirely away by stating that every argument used in his article must be read subject to the limitation "that no course of action or inaction is commendable which is really opposed to the success of England's armies."

Well, England has spoken. She means

business this time. The author of *Thoughts for a Convention* has wisely and justly said:

“The Premier of an alien cabinet has declared that there is no measure of self-government which Great Britain would not assent to being set up in Ireland, if Irishmen themselves could but come to an agreement.”

In justice to him, I must also add that Sir Edward Carson has seen the light and longs for “some solution of that long-continued Irish question that would meet the ideal of liberty of all the parties in Ireland.” One closes the review containing Professor Dicey’s article without any doubt what the verdict will be, and it will not be such a verdict as Professor Dicey, whose views, I am happy to believe, are not now widely shared in England, would render.

## VII

### SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

**S**IR HORACE PLUNKETT, whose speech at Dundalk, Ireland, June 25, 1917, is reprinted here, needs no introduction to American readers. He is almost as well known in the United States as in Ireland. His career as a member of Parliament, then as head of the Irish Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, as the founder and head of the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, and his writings, need not be dwelt on here. All well-wishers of Ireland and all those who hope for a satisfactory and honest solution of the home rule question, were glad to see that Sir Horace Plunkett had been chosen chairman of the conven-



tion. On private as well as public grounds it was a great satisfaction to see this recognition by Irishmen of one who has worked so honestly for the good of Ireland, especially considering how badly he was treated by the Liberal Government of Ireland in 1907–1908. Those who are interested in the life-work of this good Irishman might read with profit the book *Sir Horace Plunkett and His Place in the Irish Nation* by Edward E. Lysaght (Dublin and London 1916). The author of that book is also a member of the convention.

Sir Horace demonstrates the complete impracticability of the extremists who dream that the *status* and the government of Ireland could or would be settled at the peace conference. The convention is Ireland's peace conference. If the convention's work is approved by Ireland, as I feel sure it will be, there will be no real Irish question to submit to the great peace

conference that will follow Germany's surrender. The temporary inclusion of Ulster, as suggested by Sir Horace Plunkett in his speech reprinted here, will not now satisfy. A year ago it was wise statesmanship. Today it is not. There must be no division, nothing tentative or temporary about the settlement.

Sir Horace, at the end of his address, quotes from a song — probably an English song — that he says he remembers was popular some fifty years ago, called *Strangers Yet*. The thought underlying the six lines quoted is a fine one, but the verse is bad and sentimental. The Gaelic League and leaders of the Irish literary movement — W. B. Yeats, Douglas Hyde, George Russell, John M. Synge and others — have almost driven that sort of sentimentality out of Ireland. The cheap rhetoric and the sham pathos that passes for “eloquence” in some American-Irish

circles would simply not be tolerated in Ireland today. I am sure Sir Horace would agree that the following, from the eloquent pen of the chivalrous Captain Tom Kettle, is better:

“Bond, from the toil of hate we may not  
cease:

Free, we are free to be your friend.

But when you make your banquet, and we  
come,

Soldier with equal soldier must we sit,

Closing a battle, not forgetting it.

This mate and mother of valiant rebels dead  
Must come with all her history on her head.

We keep the past for pride.

Nor war nor peace shall strike our poets  
dumb:

No rawest squad of all Death's volunteers,

No simplest man who died

To tear your flag down, in the bitter years,

But shall have praise, and three times thrice  
again,

When, at that table, men shall drink with  
men.”

If the convention should fail of real result, a generally accepted result, all well-wishers not merely of Ireland but of the entire Allied cause will regret it.

My prediction is that the convention will agree and that the country will ratify its verdict. Certainly nothing would be more popular among Americans, with their undoubted sympathy for Ireland's aspirations for autonomy, than the achievement now of a real measure of home rule — one uniting all Ireland.

New York, August 28-30, 1917.

**THOUGHTS FOR A CONVENTION**

**Memorandum on the State of Ireland**

**BY GEORGE W. RUSSELL (A.E.)**



## THOUGHTS FOR A CONVENTION

1. There are moments in history when by the urgency of circumstance every one in a country is drawn from normal pursuits to consider the affairs of the nation. The merchant is turned from his warehouse, the bookman from his books, the farmer from his fields, because they realize that the very foundations of the Society, under whose shelter they were able to carry on their vocations, are being shaken, and they can no longer be voiceless, or leave it to deputies, unadvised by them, to arrange national destinies. We are all accustomed to endure the annoyances and irritations caused by legislation which is not agreeable to us, and solace ourselves by remembering that the things which

really matter are not affected. But when the destiny of a nation, the principles by which life is to be guided are at stake, all are on a level, are equally affected and are bound to give expression to their opinions. Ireland is in one of these moments of history. Circumstances with which we are all familiar and the fever in which the world exists have infected it, and it is like molten metal the skilled political artificer might pour into a desirable mould. But if it is not handled rightly, if any factor is ignored, there may be an explosion which would bring on us a fate as tragic as anything in our past history. Irishmen can no longer afford to remain aloof from each other, or to address each other distantly and defiantly from press or platform, but must strive to understand each other truly, and to give due weight to each others' opinions, and, if possible arrive at a compromise, a balancing of their diver-



sities, which may save our country from anarchy and chaos for generations to come.

2. An agreement about Irish Government must be an agreement, not between two but three Irish parties first of all, and afterwards with Great Britain. The Premier of a coalition Cabinet has declared that there is no measure of self government which Great Britain would not assent to being set up in Ireland, if Irishmen themselves could but come to an agreement. Before such a compromise between Irish parties is possible there must be a clear understanding of the ideals of these parties, as they are understood by themselves, and not as they are presented in party controversy by special pleaders whose object too often is to pervert or discredit the principles and actions of opponents, a thing which is easy to do because all parties, even the noblest, have

followers who do them disservice by ignorant advocacy or excited action. If we are to unite Ireland we can only do so by recognising what truly are the principles each party stands for, and will not forsake, and for which if necessary they will risk life. True understanding is to see ideals as they are held by men between themselves and Heaven; and in this mood I will try, first of all, to understand the position of Unionists, Sinn Feiners and Constitutional Nationalists as they have been explained to me by the best minds among them, those who have induced others of their countrymen to accept those ideals. When this is done we will see if compromise, a balancing of diversities, be not possible in an Irish State where all that is essential in these varied ideals may be harmonized and retained.

3. I will take first of all the position of Unionists. They are, many of them, the

descendants of settlers who, by their entrance into Ireland broke up the Gaelic uniformity and introduced the speech, the thoughts characteristic of another race. While they have grown to love their country as much as any of Gaelic origin, and their peculiarities have been modified by centuries of life in Ireland and by intermarriage, so that they are much more akin to their fellow-countrymen in mind and manner than they are to any other people, they still retain habits, beliefs and traditions from which they will not part. They form a class economically powerful. They have openness and energy of character, great organizing power and a mastery over materials, all qualities invaluable in an Irish State. In North-East Ulster where they are most homogeneous they conduct the affairs of their cities with great efficiency, carrying on an international trade not only with Great Britain

but with the rest of the world. They have made these industries famous. They believe that their prosperity is in large measure due to their acceptance of the Union, that it would be lessened if they threw in their lot with the other Ireland and accepted its ideals, that business which now goes to their shipyards and factories would cease if they were absorbed in a self-governing Ireland whose spokesmen had an unfortunate habit of nagging their neighbours and of conveying the impression that they are inspired by race hatred. They believe that an Irish legislature would be controlled by a majority, representatives mainly of small farmers, men who had no knowledge of affairs, or of the peculiar needs of Ulster industry, or the intricacy of the problems involved in carrying on an international trade; that the religious ideas of the majority would be so favoured in education and government that the fav-

ouritism would amount to religious oppression. They are also convinced that no small country in the present state of the world can really be independent, that such only exist by sufferance of their mighty neighbours, and must be subservient in trade policy and military policy to retain even a nominal freedom; and that an independent Ireland would by its position be a focus for the intrigues of powers hostile to Great Britain, and if it achieved independence Great Britain in self protection would be forced to conquer it again. They consider that security for industry and freedom for the individual can best be preserved in Ireland by the maintenance of the Union, and that the world spirit is with the great empires.

4. The second political group may be described as the spiritual inheritors of the more ancient race in Ireland. They regard the preservation of their nationality

as a sacred charge, themselves as a conquered people owing no allegiance to the dominant race. They cannot be called traitors to it because neither they nor their predecessors have ever admitted the right of another people to govern them against their will. They are inspired by an ancient history, a literature stretching beyond the Christian era, a national culture and distinct national ideals which they desire to manifest in a civilization which shall not be an echo or imitation of any other. While they do not depreciate the worth of English culture or its political system they are as angry at its being imposed on them as a young man with a passion for art would be if his guardian insisted on his adopting another profession and denied him any chance of manifesting his own genius. Few hatreds equal those caused by the denial or obstruction of national aptitudes. Many of those who fought in

the last Irish insurrection were fighters not merely for a political change but were rather desperate and despairing champions of a culture which they held was being stifled from infancy in Irish children in the schools of the nation. They believe that the national genius cannot manifest itself in a civilization and is not allowed to manifest itself while the Union persists. They wish Ireland to be as much itself as Japan, and as free to make its own choice of political principles, its culture and social order, and to develop its industries unfettered by the trade policy of their neighbours. Their mood is unconquerable, and while often overcome it has emerged again and again in Irish history, and it has perhaps more adherents to-day than at any period since the Act of Union, and this has been helped on by the incarnation of the Gaelic spirit in modern Anglo-Irish literature, and a host of brilliant poets, dramatists

and prose writers who have won international recognition, and have increased the dignity of spirit and the self-respect of the followers of this tradition. They assert that the Union kills the soul of the people; that empires do not permit the intensive cultivation of human life: that they destroy the richness and variety of existence by the extinction of peculiar and unique gifts, and the substitution therefor of a culture which has its value mainly for the people who created it, but is as alien to our race as the mood of the scientist is to the artist or poet.

5. The third group occupies a middle position between those who desire the perfecting of the Union and those whose claim is for complete independence: and because they occupy a middle position, and have taken colouring from the extremes between which they exist they have



been exposed to the charge of insincerity, which is unjust so far as the best minds among them are concerned. They have aimed at a middle course, not going far enough on one side or another to secure the confidence of the extremists. They have sought to maintain the connexion with the empire, and at the same time to acquire an Irish control over administration and legislation. They have been more practical than ideal, and to their credit must be placed the organizing of the movements which secured most of the reforms in Ireland since the Union, such as religious equality, the acts securing to farmers fair rents and fixity of tenure, the wise and salutary measures making possible the transfer of land from landlord to tenant, facilities for education at popular universities, the labourers' acts and many others. They are a practical party taking what they could get, and

because they could show ostensible results they have had a greater following in Ireland than any other party. This is natural because the average man in all countries is a realist. But this reliance on material results to secure support meant that they must always show results, or the minds of their countrymen veered to those ultimates and fundamentals which await settlement here as they do in all civilizations. As in the race with Atalanta the golden apples had to be thrown in order to win the race. The intellect of Ireland is now fixed on fundamentals, and the compromise this middle party is able to offer does not make provision for the ideals of either of the extremists, and indeed meets little favour anywhere in a country excited by recent events in world history, where revolutionary changes are expected and a settlement far more in accord with fundamental principles.

6. It is possible that many of the rank and file of these parties will not at first agree with the portraits painted of their opponents, and that is because the special pleaders of the press, who in Ireland are, as a rule, allowed little freedom to state private convictions, have come to regard themselves as barristers paid to conduct a case, and have acquired the habit of isolating particular events, the hasty speech or violent action of individuals in localities, and of exhibiting these as indicating the whole character of the party attacked. They misrepresent Irishmen to each other. The Ulster advocates of the Union, for example, are accustomed to hear from their advisers that the favourite employment of Irish farmers in the three southern provinces is cattle driving, if not worse. They are told that Protestants in these provinces live in fear of their lives, whereas anybody who has knowledge

of the true conditions know that, so far from being riotous and unbusinesslike, the farmers in these provinces have developed a network of rural associations, dairies, bacon factories, agricultural and poultry societies, etc., doing their business efficiently, applying the teachings of science in their factories, competing in quality of output with the very best of the same class of society in Ulster and obtaining as good prices in the same market. As a matter of fact this method of organization now largely adopted by Ulster farmers was initiated in the South. In the charge of intolerance I do not believe. Here, as in all other countries, there are unfortunate souls obsessed by dark powers, whose human malignity takes the form of religious hatreds, but I believe, and the thousands of Irish Protestants in the Southern Counties will affirm it as true, that they have nothing to complain

of in this respect. I am sure that in this matter of religious tolerance these provinces can stand favourable comparison with any country in the world where there are varieties of religions, even with Great Britain. I would plead with my Ulster compatriots not to gaze too long or too credulously into that distorting mirror held up to them, nor be tempted to take individual action as representative of the mass. How would they like to have the depth or quality of spiritual life in their great city represented by the scrawlings and revilings about the head of the Catholic Church to be found occasionally on the blank walls of Belfast? If the same method of distortion by selection of facts was carried out there is not a single city or nation which could not be made to appear baser than Sodom or Gomorrah and as deserving of their fate.

7. The Ulster character is better ap-

preciated by Southern Ireland, and there is little reason to vindicate it against any charges except the slander that Ulster Unionists do not regard themselves as Irishmen, and that they have no love for their own country. Their position is that they are Unionists, not merely because it is for the good of Great Britain, but because they hold it to be for the good of Ireland, and it is the Irish argument weighs with them, and if they were convinced it would be better for Ireland to be self-governed they would throw in their lot with the rest of Ireland, which would accept them gladly and greet them as a prodigal son who had returned, having made, unlike most prodigal sons, a fortune, and well able to be the wisest adviser in family affairs. It is necessary to preface what I have to say by way of argument or remonstrance to Irish parties by words making it clear that I write without

prejudice against any party, and that I do not in the least underestimate their good qualities or the weight to be attached to their opinions and ideals. It is the traditional Irish way, which we have too often forgotten, to notice the good in the opponent before battling with what is evil. So Maeve, the ancient Queen of Connacht, looking over the walls of her city of Cruachan at the Ulster foemen, said of them, "Noble and regal is their appearance," and her own followers said, "Noble and regal are those of whom you speak." When we lost the old Irish culture we lost the tradition of courtesy to each other which lessens the difficulties of life and makes it possible to conduct controversy without creating bitter memories.

8. I desire first to argue with Irish Unionists whether it is accurate to say of them, as it would appear to be from their spokesmen, that the principle of national-

ity cannot be recognized by them or allowed to take root in the commonwealth of dominions which form the Empire. Must one culture only exist? Must all citizens have their minds poured into the same mould, and varieties of gifts and cultural traditions be extinguished? What would India with its myriad races say to that theory? What would Canada enclosing in its dominion and cherishing a French Canadian nation say? Unionists have by every means in their power discouraged the study of the national literature of Ireland though it is one of the most ancient in Europe, though the scholars of France and Germany have founded journals for its study, and its beauty is being recognized by all who have read it. It contains the race memory of Ireland, its imaginations and thoughts for two thousand years. Must that be obliterated? Must national character be steril-



ized of all taint of its peculiar beauty? Must Ireland have no character of its own but be servilely imitative of its neighbour in all things and be nothing of itself? It is objected that the study of Irish history, Irish literature and the national culture generates hostility to the Empire. Is that a true psychological analysis? Is it not true in all human happenings that if people are denied what is right and natural they will instantly assume an attitude of hostility to the power which denies? The hostility is not inherent in the subject but is evoked by the denial. I put it to my Unionist compatriots that the ideal is to aim at a diversity of culture, and the greatest freedom, richness and variety of thought. The more this richness and variety prevail in a nation the less likelihood is there of the tyranny of one culture over the rest. We should aim in Ireland at that freedom of the an-

cient Athenians, who, as Pericles said, listened gladly to the opinions of others and did not turn sour faces on those who disagreed with them. A culture which is allowed essential freedom to develop will soon perish if it does not in itself contain the elements of human worth which make for immortality. The world has to its sorrow many instances of freak religions which were persecuted and so by natural opposition were perpetuated and hardened in belief. We should allow the greatest freedom in respect of cultural developments in Ireland so that the best may triumph by reason of superior beauty and not because the police are relied upon to maintain one culture in a dominant position.

9. I have also an argument to address to the extremists whose claim, uttered lately with more openness and vehemence, is for the complete independence of the

whole of Ireland, who cry out against partition, who will not have a square mile of Irish soil subject to foreign rule. That implies they desire the inclusion of Ulster and the inhabitants of Ulster in their Irish State. I tell them frankly that if they expect Ulster to throw its lot in with a self-governing Ireland they must remain within the commonwealth of dominions which constitute the Empire, be prepared loyally, once Ireland has complete control over its internal affairs, to accept the status of a dominion and the responsibilities of that wider union. If they will not accept that status as the Boers did, they will never draw that important and powerful Irish party into an Irish State except by force, and do they think there is any possibility of that? It is extremely doubtful whether if the world stood aloof, and allowed Irishmen to fight out their own quarrels among

themselves, that the fighters for complete independence could conquer a community so numerous, so determined, so wealthy, so much more capable of providing for themselves the plentiful munitions by which alone one army can hope to conquer another. In South Africa men who had fiercer traditional hostilities than Irishmen of different parties here have had, who belonged to different races, who had a few years before been engaged in a racial war, were great enough to rise above these past antagonisms, to make an agreement and abide faithfully by it. Is the same magnanimity not possible in Ireland? I say to my countrymen who cry out for the complete separation of Ireland from the Empire that they will not in this generation bring with them the most powerful and wealthy, if not the most numerous, party in their country. Complete control of Irish affairs is a possibility, and I

suggest to the extremists that the status of a self-governing dominion inside a federation of dominions is a proposal which, if other safeguards for minority interests are incorporated, would attract Unionist attention. But if these men who depend so much in their economic enterprises upon a friendly relation with their largest customers are to be allured into a self-governing Ireland there must be acceptance of the Empire as an essential condition. The Boers found it not impossible to accept this status for the sake of a United South Africa. Are our Irish Boers not prepared to make a compromise and abide by it loyally for the sake of a united Ireland?

10. A remonstrance must also be addressed to the middle party in that it has made no real effort to understand and conciliate the feelings of Irish Unionists. They have indeed made promises, no doubt

sincerely, but they have undone the effect of all they said by encouraging of recent years the growth of sectarian organizations with political aims and have relied on these as on a party machine. It may be said that in Ulster a similar organization, sectarian with political objects, has long existed, and that this justified a counter organization. Both in my opinion are unjustifiable and evil, but the backing of such an organization was specially foolish in the case of the majority, whose main object ought to be to allure the minority into the same political fold. The baser elements in society, the intriguers, the job-seekers, and all who would acquire by influence what they cannot attain by merit, flock into such bodies, and create a sinister impression as to their objects and deliberations. If we are to have national concord among Irishmen, religion must be left to the Churches whose

duty it is to promote it, and be dissevered from party politics, and it should be regarded as contrary to national idealism to organize men of one religion into secret societies with political or economic aims. So shall be left to Cæsar the realm which is Cæsar's, and it shall not appear part of the politics of eternity that Michael's sister's son obtains a particular post beginning at thirty shillings a week. I am not certain that it should not be an essential condition of any Irish settlement that all such sectarian organizations should be disbanded in so far as their objects are political, and remain solely as friendly societies. It is useless assuring a minority already suspicious, of the tolerance it may expect from the majority, if the party machine of the majority is sectarian and semi-secret, if no one of the religion of the minority may join it. I believe in spite of the recent growth of

sectarian societies that it has affected but little the general tolerant spirit in Ireland, and where evils have appeared they have speedily resulted in the break up of the organization in the locality. Irishmen individually as a rule are much nobler in spirit than the political organizations they belong to.

11. It is necessary to speak with the utmost frankness and not to slur over any real difficulty in the way of a settlement. Irish parties must rise above themselves if they are to bring about an Irish unity. They appear on the surface unreconcilable, but that, in my opinion, is because the spokesmen of parties are under the illusion that they should never indicate in public that they might possibly abate one jot of the claims of their party. A crowd or organization is often more extreme than its individual members. I have spoken to Unionists and Sinn Feiners



and find them as reasonable in private as they are unreasonable in public. I am convinced that an immense relief would be felt by all Irishmen if a real settlement of the Irish question could be arrived at, a compromise which would reconcile them to living under one government, and would at the same time enable us to live at peace with our neighbours. The suggestions which follow were the result of discussions between a group of Unionists, Nationalists and Sinn Feiners, and as they found it possible to agree upon a compromise it is hoped that the policy which harmonized their diversities may help to bring about a similar result in Ireland.

12. I may now turn to consider the Anglo-Irish problem and to make specific suggestions for its solution and the character of the government to be established in Ireland. The factors are triple. There is first the desire many centuries

old of Irish nationalists for self-government and the political unity of the people: secondly, there is the problem of the Unionists who require that the self-governing Ireland they enter shall be friendly to the imperial connection, and that their religious and economic interests shall be safeguarded by real and not merely by verbal guarantees; and, thirdly, there is the position of Great Britain which requires, reasonably enough, that any self-governing dominion set up alongside it shall be friendly to the empire. In this matter Great Britain has priority of claim to consideration, for it has first proposed a solution, the Home Rule Act which is on the Statute Book, though later variants of that have been outlined because of the attitude of Unionists in North-East Ulster, variants which suggest the partition of Ireland, the elimination of six counties from the area con-

trolled by the Irish government. This Act, or the variants of it offered to Ireland, is the British contribution to the settlement of the Anglo-Irish problem.

13. If it is believed that this scheme, or any diminutive of it, will settle the Anglo-Irish problem, British statesmen and people who trust them are only preparing for themselves bitter disappointment. I believe that nothing less than complete self-government has ever been the object of Irish Nationalism. However ready certain sections have been to accept instalments, no Irish political leader ever had authority to pledge his countrymen to accept a half measure as a final settlement of the Irish claim. The Home Rule Act, if put into operation tomorrow, even if Ulster were cajoled or coerced into accepting it, would not be regarded by Irish Nationalists as a final settlement, no matter what may be said at

Westminster. Nowhere in Ireland has it been accepted as final. Received without enthusiasm at first, every year which has passed since the Bill was introduced has seen the system of self-government formulated there subjected to more acute and hostile criticism: and I believe it would be perfectly accurate to say that its passing to-morrow would only be the preliminary for another agitation, made fiercer by the unrest of the world, where revolutions and the upsetting of dynasties are in the air, and where the claims of nationalities no more ancient than the Irish, like the Poles, the Finns, and the Arabs, to political freedom are admitted by the spokesmen of the great powers, Great Britain, included, or are already conceded. If any partition of Ireland is contemplated, this will intensify the bitterness now existing. I believe it is to the interest of Great Britain to settle the Anglo-Irish

dispute. It has been countered in many of its policies in America and the Colonies by the vengeful feelings of Irish exiles. There may yet come a time when the refusal of the Irish mouse to gnaw at a net spread about the lion may bring about the downfall of the empire. It cannot be to the interest of Great Britain to have on its flank some millions of people who, whenever Great Britain is engaged in a war which threatens its existence, feel a thrill running through them, as prisoners do hearing the guns sounding closer of an army which comes, as they think, to liberate them. Nations denied essential freedom ever feel like that when the power which dominates them is itself in peril. Who can doubt but for the creation of Dominion Government in South Africa that the present war would have found the Boers thirsty for revenge, and the Home Government incapable of dealing

with a distant people who taxed its resources but a few years previous? I have no doubt that if Ireland was granted the essential freedom and wholeness in its political life it desires, its mood also would be turned. I have no feelings of race hatred, no exultation in thought of the downfall of any race; but as a close observer of the mood of millions in Ireland, I feel certain that if their claim is not met they will brood and scheme and wait to strike a blow; though the dream may be handed on from them to their children and their children's children, yet they will hope, sometime, to give the last vengeful thrust of enmity at the stricken heart of the empire.

14. Any measure which is not a settlement, which leaves Ireland still actively discontented is a waste of effort, and the sooner English statesmen realize the futility of half-measures the better. A man

who claims a debt he believes is due to him, who is offered half of it in payment, is not going to be conciliated or be one iota more friendly, if he knows that the other is able to pay the full amount and it could be yielded without detriment to the donor. Ireland will never be content with a system of self-government which lessens its representation in the Imperial Parliament, and still retains for that Parliament control over all-important matters like taxation and trade policy. Whoever controls these controls the character of an Irish civilization, and the demand of Ireland is not merely for administrative powers, but the power to fashion its own national policy, and to build up a civilization of its own with an economic character in keeping by self-devised and self-checked efforts. To misunderstand this is to suppose there is no such thing as national idealism, and that a people will accept sub-

stitutes for the principle of nationality, whereas the past history of the world and present circumstance in Europe is evidence that nothing is more unconquerable and immortal than national feeling, and that it emerges from centuries of alien government, and is ready at any time to flare out in insurrection. At no period in Irish history was that sentiment more self-conscious than it is to-day.

15. Nationalist Ireland requires that the Home Rule Act should be radically changed to give Ireland unfettered control over taxation, customs, excise and trade policy. These powers are at present denied, and if the Act were in operation, Irish people instead of trying to make the best of it, would begin at once to use whatever powers they had as a lever to gain the desired control, and this would lead to fresh antagonism and a prolonged struggle between the two coun-



tries, and in this last effort Irish Nationalists would have the support of that wealthy class now Unionist in the three southern provinces, and also in Ulster if it were included, for they would then desire as much as Nationalists that, while they live in a self-governing Ireland, the powers of the Irish Government should be such as would enable it to build up Irish industries by an Irish trade policy, and to impose taxation in a way to suit Irish conditions. As the object of British consent to Irish self-government is to dispose of Irish antagonism nothing is to be gained by passing measures which will not dispose of it. The practically unanimous claim of Nationalists as exhibited in the press in Ireland is for the status and powers of economic control possessed by the self-governing dominions. By this alone will the causes of friction between the two nations be removed, and a real solidarity

of interest based on a federal union for joint defence of the freedom and well-being of the federated communities be possible, and I have no doubt it would take place. I do not believe that hatreds remain for long among people when the causes which created them are removed. We have seen in Europe and in the dominions the continual reversals of feeling which have taken place when a sore has been removed. Antagonisms are replaced by alliances. It is mercifully true of human nature that it prefers to exercise goodwill to hatred when it can, and the common sense of the best in Ireland would operate, once there was no longer interference in our internal affairs, to allay and keep in order these turbulent elements which exist in every country, but which only become a danger to society when real grievances based on the violation of true principles of government are present.

16. The Union has failed absolutely to conciliate Ireland. Every generation there have been rebellions and shootings and agitations of a vehement and exhausting character carried continually to the point of lawlessness before Irish grievances could be redressed. A form of government which requires a succession of rebellions to secure reforms afterwards admitted to be reasonable cannot be a good form of government. These agitations have inflicted grave material and moral injury on Ireland. The instability of the political system has prejudiced natural economic development. Capital will not be invested in industries where no one is certain about the future. And because the will of the people was so passionately set on political freedom an atmosphere of suspicion gathered around public movements which in other countries would have been allowed to carry on their beneficent work unhindered

by any party. Here they were continually being forced to declare themselves either for or against self-government. The long attack on the movement for the organization of Irish agriculture was an instance. Men are elected on public bodies not because they are efficient administrators, but because they can be trusted to pass resolutions favouring one party or another. This has led to corruption. Every conceivable rascality in Ireland has hid itself behind the great names of nation or empire. The least and the most harmless actions of men engaged in philanthropic or educational work or social reform are scrutinized and criticized so as to obstruct good work. If a phrase even suggests the possibility of a political partiality, or tendency to anything which might be construed by the most suspicious scrutineer to indicate a remote desire to use the work done as an argument either

for or against self-government, the man or movement is never allowed to forget it. Public service becomes intolerable and often impossible under such conditions, and while the struggle continues this also will continue to the moral detriment of the people. There are only two forms of government possible. A people may either be governed by force or may govern themselves. The dual government of Ireland by two houses of Parliament, one in Dublin and one in London, contemplated in the Home Rule Act would be impossible and irritating. Whatever may be said for two bodies, each with its spheres of influence clearly defined, there is nothing to be said for two legislatures with concurrent powers of legislation and taxation, and with members from Ireland retained at Westminster to provide some kind of democratic excuse for the exercise of powers of Irish legislation and taxation by the Par-

liament at Westminster. The Irish demand is that Great Britain shall throw upon our shoulders the full weight of responsibility for the management of our own affairs, so that we can only blame ourselves and our political guides and not Great Britain if we err in our policies.

17. I have stated what I believe to be sound reasons for the recognition of the justice of the Irish demand by Great Britain and I now turn to Ulster, and ask it whether the unstable condition of things in Ireland does not affect it even more than Great Britain. If it persists in its present attitude, if it remains out of a self-governing Ireland, it will not thereby exempt itself from political, social and economic trouble. Ireland will regard the six Ulster counties as the French have regarded Alsace-Lorraine, whose hopes of reconquest turned Europe into an armed camp, with the endless suspicions, secret

treaties, military and naval developments, the expense of maintaining huge armies, and finally the inevitable war. So sure as Ulster remains out, so surely will it become a focus for nationalist designs. I say nothing of the injury to the great wholesale business carried on from its capital city throughout the rest of Ireland where the inevitable and logical answer of merchants in the rest of Ireland to requests for orders will be: "You would die rather than live in the same political house with us. We will die rather than trade with you." There will be lamentably and inevitably a fiercer tone between North and South. Everything which happens in one quarter will be distorted in the other. Each will lie about the other. The materials will exist more than before for civil commotion, and this will be aided by the powerful minority of Nationalists in the excluded counties working in conjunction

with their allies across the border. Nothing was ever gained in life by hatred; nothing good ever came of it or could come of it; and the first and most important of all the commandments of the spirit that there should be brotherhood between men will be deliberately broken to the ruin of the spiritual life of Ireland.

18. So far from Irish Nationalists wishing to oppress Ulster, I believe that there is hardly any demand which could be made, even involving democratic injustice to themselves, which would not willingly be granted if their Ulster compatriots would fling their lot in with the rest of Ireland and heal the eternal sore. I ask Ulster what is there that they could not do as efficiently in an Ireland with the status and economic power of a self-governing dominion as they do at present? Could they not build their ships and sell them, manufacture and export their linens? What do



they mean when they say Ulster industries would be taxed? I cannot imagine any Irish taxation which their wildest dreams imagined so heavy as the taxation which they will endure as part of the United Kingdom in future. They will be implicated in all the revolutionary legislation made inevitable in Great Britain by the recoil on society of the munition workers and disbanded conscripts. Ireland, which luckily for itself, has the majority of its population economically independent as workers on the land, and which, in the development of agriculture now made necessary as a result of changes in naval warfare, will be able to absorb without much trouble its returning workers, Ireland will be much quieter, less revolutionary and less expensive to govern. I ask what reason is there to suppose that taxation in a self-governing Ireland would be greater than in Great Britain after the war, or in

what way Ulster industries could be singled out, or for what evil purpose by an Irish Parliament? It would be only too anxious rather to develop still further the one great industrial centre in Ireland; and would, it is my firm conviction, allow the representatives of Ulster practically to dictate the industrial policy of Ireland. Has there ever at any time been the slightest opposition by any Irish Nationalist to proposals made by Ulster industrialists which would lend colour to such a suspicion? Personally, I think that Ulster without safeguards of any kind might trust its fellow-countrymen; the weight, the intelligence, the vigour of character of Ulster people in any case would enable them to dominate Ireland economically.

19. But I do not for a moment say that Ulster is not justified in demanding safeguards. Its leader, speaking at Westminster during one of the debates on the

Home Rule Bill, said scornfully, "We do not fear oppressive legislation. We know in fact there would be none. What we do fear is oppressive administration." That I translate to mean that Ulster fears that the policy of the spoils to the victors would be adopted, and that jobbery in Nationalist and Catholic interests would be rampant. There are as many honest Nationalists and Catholics who would object to this as there are Protestant Unionists, and they would readily accept as part of any settlement the proposal that all posts which can rightly be filled by competitive examination shall only be filled after examination by Irish Civil Service Commissioners, and that this should include all posts paid for out of public funds whether directly under the Irish Government or under County Councils, Urban Councils, Corporations, or Boards of Guardians. Further, they would allow the Ulster

Counties through their members a veto on any important administrative position where the area of the official's operation was largely confined to North-East Ulster, if such posts were of a character which could not rightly be filled after examination and must needs be a government appointment. I have heard the suspicion expressed that Gaelic might be made a subject compulsory on all candidates, and that this would prejudice the chances of Ulster candidates desirous of entering the Civil Service. Nationalist opinion would readily agree that, if marks were given for Gaelic, an alternative language, such as French or German, should be allowed the candidate as a matter of choice and the marks given be of equal value. By such concession jobbery would be made impossible. The corruption and bribery now prevalent in local government would be a thing of the past. Nationalists and Un-

ionists alike would be assured of honest administration and that merit and efficiency, not membership of some sectarian or political association, would lead to public service.

20. If that would not be regarded as adequate protection, Nationalists are ready to consider with friendly minds any other safeguards proposed either by Ulster or Southern Unionists, though in my opinion the less there are formal and legal acknowledgments of differences the better, for it is desirable that Protestant and Catholic, Unionist and Nationalist, should meet and redivide along other lines than those of religion or past party politics, and it is obvious that the raising of artificial barriers might perpetuate the present lines of division. A real settlement is impossible without the inclusion of the whole province in the Irish State, and apart from the passionate sentiment existing in Na-

tionalist Ireland for the unity of the whole country there are strong economic bonds between Ulster and the three provinces. Further, the exclusion of all or a large part of Ulster would make the excluded part too predominantly industrial and the rest of Ireland too exclusively agricultural, tending to prevent that right balance between rural and urban industry which all nations should aim at and which makes for a varied intellectual life, social and political wisdom and a healthy national being. Though for the sake of obliteration of past differences I would prefer as little building by legislation of fences isolating one section of the community from another, still I am certain that if Ulster, as the price of coming into a self-governing Ireland, demanded some application of the Swiss Cantonal system to itself which would give it control over local administration, it could have it; or, again

it could be conceded the powers of local control vested in the provincial governments in Canada, where the provincial assemblies have exclusive power to legislate for themselves in respect of local works, municipal institutions, licences, and administration of justice in the province. Further, subject to certain provisions protecting the interests of different religious bodies, the provincial assemblies have the exclusive power to make laws upon education. Would not this give Ulster all the guarantees for civil and religious liberty it requires? What arguments of theirs, what fears have they expressed, which would not be met by such control over local administration? I would prefer that the mind of Ulster should argue its points with the whole of Ireland and press its ideals upon it without reservation of its wisdom for itself. But doubtless if Ulster accepted this proposal it would

benefit the rest of Ireland by the model it would set of efficient administration: and it would, I have no doubt, insert in its Provincial constitution all the safeguards for minorities there which they would ask should be inserted in any Irish constitution to protect the interest of their co-religionists in that part of Ireland where they are in a minority.

21. I can deal only with fundamentals in this memorandum because it is upon fundamentals there are differences of thinking. Once these are settled, it would be comparatively easy to devise the necessary clauses in an Irish constitution, giving safeguards to England for the due payment of the advances under the Land Acts, and the principles upon which an Irish contribution should be made to the empire for naval and military purposes. It was suggested by Mr. Lionel Curtis in his *Problems of the Commonwealth*, that



assessors might be appointed by the dominions to fix the fair taxable capacity of each for this purpose. It will be observed that while I have claimed for Ireland the status of a dominion, I have referred solely hitherto to the powers of control over trade policy, customs, excise, taxation and legislation possessed by the dominions, and have not claimed for Ireland the right to have an army or a navy of its own. I recognize that the proximity of the two islands makes it desirable to consolidate the naval power under the control of the Admiralty. The regular army should remain in the same way under the War Office which would have the power of recruiting in Ireland. The Irish Parliament would, I have no doubt, be willing to raise at its own expense under an Irish Territorial Council a territorial force similar to that of England but not removable from Ireland. Military con-

scription could never be permitted except by act of the Irish Parliament. It would be a denial of the first principle of nationality if the power of conscripting the citizens of the country lay not in the hands of the National Parliament but was exercised by another nation.

22. While a self-governing Ireland would contribute money to the defence of the federated empire, it would not be content that that money should be spent on dockyards, arsenals, camps, harbours, naval stations, ship-building and supplies in Great Britain to the almost complete neglect of Ireland as at present. A large contribution for such purposes spent outside Ireland would be an economic drain if not balanced by counter expenditure here. This might be effected by the training of a portion of the navy and army and the Irish regiments of the regular army in Ireland and their equipment,

clothing, supplies, munitions and rations, being obtained through an Irish department. Naval dockyards should be constructed here and a proportion of ships built in them. Just as surely as there must be a balance between the imports and exports of a country, so must there be a balance between the revenue raised in a nation and the public expenditure on that nation. Irish economic depression after the Act of Union was due in large measure to absentee landlordism and the expenditure of Irish revenue outside Ireland with no proportionate return. This must not be expected to continue against Irish interests. Ireland, granted the freedom it desires, would be willing to defend its freedom and the freedom of other dominions in the commonwealth of nations it belonged to, but it is not willing to allow millions to be raised in Ireland and spent outside Ireland. If three or five millions are raised

in Ireland for imperial purposes and spent in Great Britain, it simply means that the vast employment of labour necessitated takes place outside Ireland: whereas if spent here, it would mean the employment of many thousands of men, the support of their families, and in the economic chain would follow the support of those who cater for them in food, clothing, housing, etc. Even with the best will in the world, to do its share towards its defence of the freedom it had attained, Ireland could not permit such an economic drain on its resources. No country could approve of a policy which in its application means the emigration of thousands of its people every year while it continued.

23. I believe even if there were no historical basis for Irish nationalism that such claims as I have stated would have become inevitable, because the tendency of humanity as it develops intellectually and

spiritually is to desire more and more freedom, and to substitute more and more an internal law for external law or government, and that the solidarity of empires or nations will depend not so much upon the close texture of their political organization or the uniformity of mind so engendered as upon the freedom allowed and the delight people feel in that freedom. The more educated a man is the more it is hateful to him to be constrained and the more impossible does it become for central governments to provide by regulation for the infinite variety of desires and cultural developments which spring up everywhere and are in themselves laudable, and in no way endanger the state. A recognition of this has already led to much decentralization in Great Britain itself. And if the claim for more power in the administration of local affairs was so strongly felt in a homogeneous country like Great Britain

that, through its county council system, people in districts like Kent or Essex have been permitted control over education and the purchase of land, and the distribution of it to small holders, how much more passionately must this desire for self-control be felt in Ireland where people have a different national character which has survived all the educational experiments to change them into the likeness of their neighbours. The battle which is going on in the world has been stated to be a spiritual conflict between those who desire greater freedom for the individual and think that the state exists to preserve that freedom, and those who believe in the predominance of the state and the complete subjection of the individual to it and the moulding of the individual mind in its image. This has been stated, and if the first view is a declaration of ideals sincerely held by Great Britain, it would mean the

granting to Ireland, a country which has expressed its wishes by vaster majorities than were ever polled in any other country for political changes, the satisfaction of its desires.

24. The acceptance of the proposals here made would mean sacrifices for the two extremes in Ireland, and neither party has as yet made any real sacrifice to meet the other; but each has gone on its own way. I urge upon them that if the suggestions made here were accepted, both would obtain substantially what they desire, the Ulster Unionists, that safety for their interests and provision for Ireland's unity with the commonwealth of dominions inside the empire; the Nationalists, that power they desire to create an Irish civilization by self-devised and self-checked efforts. The brotherhood of dominions of which they would form one would be inspired as much by the fresh

life and wide democratic outlook of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada, as by the hoarier political wisdom of Great Britain; and military, naval, foreign and colonial policy must in the future be devised by the representatives of those dominions sitting in council together with the representatives of Great Britain. Does not that indicate a different form of imperialism from that they hold in no friendly memory? It would not be imperialism in the ancient sense but a federal union of independent nations to protect national liberties, which might draw into its union other peoples hitherto unconnected with it, and so beget a league of nations to make a common international law prevail. The allegiance would be to common principles which mankind desire and would not permit the dominance of any one race. We have not only to be good Irishmen



but good citizens of the world, and one is as important as the other, for earth is more and more forcing on its children a recognition of their fundamental unity, and that all rise and fall and suffer together, and that none can escape the infection from their common humanity. If these ideas emerge from the world conflict and are accepted as world morality, it will be some compensation for the anguish of learning the lesson. We in Ireland like the rest of the world must rise above ourselves and our differences if we are to manifest the genius which is in us, and play a noble part in world history.

## NOTE

I was asked to put into shape for publication ideas and suggestions for an Irish settlement which had been discussed among a group whose members represented all extremes in Irish opinion. The compromise arrived at was embodied in documents written by members of the group privately circulated, criticized and again amended. I make special acknowledgments to Colonel Maurice Moore, Mr. James G. Douglas, Mr. Edward E. Lysaght, Mr. Joseph Johnston, F.T.C.D., Mr. Alec Wilson and Mr. Diarmid Coffey. For the spirit, method of presentation and general arguments used, I alone am responsible. And if any are offended at what I have said, I am to be blamed, not my fellow-workers.

A. E.

## ADDENDUM

This pamphlet is a reprint of articles which appeared in the *Irish Times* on the 26th, 28th and 29th of May. The letters which follow appeared in the same paper on the 31st of May.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES

SIR — In an attempt to discover what measure of agreement to-day was possible between the political antagonists of yesterday, the attention of a few dozen Irish men and women was drawn to the articles by A. E. which have appeared in your columns, and the following statement was signed by those whose names are appended beneath it:—

“ We, the undersigned, having read *Thoughts for a Convention* by A. E. without endorsing all his statements, express our general agreement with his conclusions and

with the argument by which these are reached.”

The signatories include: —

His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin.

The Lord Monteagle, K.P.

Sir John Griffith, M.A.I., M. Inst. C. E.

Sir Nugent Everard.

Sir Algernon Coote, Bt.

Sir J. R. O'Connell, LL.D.

Sir Henry Grattan Bellew, Bt.

Lady Gregory.

Mrs. J. R. Green.

Douglas Hyde, LL.D., D.Litt., Professor Irish National University.

Edmund Curtis, M.A., Professor Oratory, History and English Literature, Dublin University.

T. B. Rudmose Brown, M.A., Professor of Romance Languages, University of Dublin.

Dermod O'Brien, President Royal Hibernian Academy.

Thomas E. Gordon, M.B., F.R.C.S.I.

Oliver Gogarty, F.R.C.S.I.

Joseph T. Wigham, M.D.

Frank C. Purser, M.D.  
Robert J. Rowlette, M.D.  
Edward Martyn.  
George Gavan Duffy.  
F. J. O'Connor.  
John Mackie, F.C.A.  
John O'Neill.  
John McCann.  
J. Hubbard Clarke, J.P.  
Thomas Butler.  
John Douglas.  
E. A. Stopford.  
James MacNeill.

Does not this suggest that agreement might also be possible in an Irish Convention if, by some miracle, Irishmen of various parties would step out of their well-fenced enclosures to take counsel in common? — Yours, etc.,

JAMES G. DOUGLAS.

Dublin, May 30th, 1917.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES

SIR — May I express the hope that “A. E.’s” *Thoughts for a Convention*, the last instalment of which you published yesterday, and which I am informed will reappear as a pamphlet this week, will be widely read? I am not thinking of his conclusions, ably reasoned as they are, but of the tone and temper in which he handles the most explosive material in the whole magazine of Irish controversy. It is refreshing to listen to one who not only has the courage of his convictions, but can also say honestly that the convictions are his own and not somebody else’s.

“A. E.” strikes a note which may go far to make the Convention the success the vast majority of Irishmen hardly dare to hope that it will be. If he speaks only for himself, “More shame for his generation” will surely be the verdict of history.

Yours, etc.,

HORACE PLUNKETT.

The Plunkett House, Dublin,

May 30th, 1917.

**A DEFENCE OF THE CONVENTION**

**A Speech delivered at Dundalk**

**June 25, 1917**

**BY SIR HORACE PLUNKETT**

“Sinn Fein, Labour and Mr. O’Brien’s League now stand out. But the Bishops have accepted Mr. Lloyd George’s invitation, and a noble and statesmanlike speech by Sir Horace Plunkett — his first on the political platform for fifteen years — in favour of the Convention should have an effect.”

— *The New Statesman.*



## A DEFENCE OF THE CONVENTION

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

**T**HIS is the first time in over fifteen years that I have stood on a platform which could be called political, and I daresay there are many others here who leave party politics severely alone. But to-day Ireland, in common with many another country, is passing through a crisis unprecedented in its history, and the call has come for men of no party to work together with men of all parties in the field of politics. For, whether we wish it or not, changes are about to be made in our system of government which must profoundly affect us all. These changes are to be discussed in a National Convention, which the leader of over four-fifths of our

Parliamentary representatives has himself declared should be composed mainly of non-partisan Irishmen. To these latter, therefore, I desire chiefly to speak, as one of them, upon our political duty at this time.

#### THE CONVENTION AND ITS CRITICS

A great majority of the Irish people have already decided that an attempt should be made at once in Ireland by Irishmen to come to some agreement, and have welcomed the plan offered for our acceptance by the Government. But voices are heard denying that the Convention gives us any real opportunity of attaining the end in view. So strongly is this felt that a body of opinion, of unknown numerical strength but of unquestioned sincerity and of great determination, is urging upon us a wholly different plan. Ireland is to appear before the Peace Conference

and to demand that her government shall be brought into accord with the principles for which the Allies profess to be fighting. These men who reject, and others who accept, the Convention make two objections to it: they say, first, that it is not in any true sense representative, and secondly, that it has no power to get legislative effect given to its decision, no matter by how large a majority its wishes may be declared. The best contribution I can make to your deliberations will be to examine, briefly, the alternative which has been suggested, to answer, as far as I can, the two damaging criticisms of the Convention itself, and then to give my reason for holding that we should accept the offer of the Government.

#### IRELAND AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

It would not be fair to criticize the Peace Conference proposal in its details,

because the time has not come to work these out; but it is quite necessary to discuss the plan in its broad outlines, since it is advocated as a better way than that which most of us wish to take. I submit, then, that if the Conference were to meet to-morrow, Ireland could not be represented at it, for the obvious reason that there would be no agreement as to who were to be her plenipotentiaries. But, if this difficulty were surmounted — and in an atmosphere which makes it almost impossible to find an Irish Chairman for our Convention it is a big “if” — what is it that our plenipotentiaries are going to ask of the assembled representatives of the war-worn nations? They will have to admit that the people of Ireland are not unanimous as to the kind of government they require. Some prefer the *status quo*; others desire devolution within the United Kingdom; a much larger section favour

government within the British Commonwealth of self-governing nations, but differ considerably as to the precise position Ireland should occupy in it; and yet another group desire to make their country an independent sovereign State. Worse still, there is the Ulster difficulty, which three short years ago brought us to the verge of civil war. What, again, I ask, would our plenipotentiaries at the peace conference propose, assuming — and it is a large assumption — that the Conference admitted them to its councils and did not tell them to try first a conference at home? Is it likely that the representatives of the nations, having to discover the means to be taken to prevent further attempts to disturb the world's peace and the practicable limitations of militarism and navalism, having to decide vast questions of restitution and reparation, having to allay the fiercest racial antagonisms

of the Near East — to mention but a few of their problems — will welcome the task of settling the Irish question not only in its old and well-understood Anglo-Irish significance, but in its later development of Irish disagreement? How many minorities is a peace conference to be asked to coerce, to say nothing of the coercion of Great Britain which any settlement agreeable to the advocates of this plan would involve? I cannot help feeling that this method of settlement, which, no doubt, will appeal to the imagination and stir the pride of many Irishmen, would provoke more violent opposition than any that has yet been proposed. So let us turn to the Convention, and see whether that bird in the hand does not offer a better solution than this doubtful bird in a distant bush.

THE ALLEGED UNREPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF THE CONVENTION

I come now to the main criticism of the Convention — its constitution. It is not ideally representative — that may be admitted at once. It is widely felt that the only satisfactory plan would be to let the democracy choose its delegates as it chooses its Parliamentary representatives. But there are several objections to any popular election just now. The Parliamentary register is out of date, and it would take a long time to revise it. The country is in a state of considerable unrest, which we all hope the Convention will allay. In the circumstances, if we were to have a hundred fights over the selection of the delegates, the birthpangs of the Convention might be fatal to the spirit in which it can alone succeed. There is a very strongly felt objection to having

any election while a large number of Irishmen are fighting abroad. No body of citizens has a better right to be heard than those soldiers, who, apart from other claims, are very likely to have gained some wide points of view. I fully realize that the *Sinn Fein* group have a grievance in the large representation of local government bodies elected before they gained their present numerical strength; but it is notorious that the great bulk of that party — which rose phœnix-like out of the ashes of the rebellion — consists of recent converts. Has their doctrine failed to commend itself to a full proportion of the chairman of county and county-borough councils and to the urban district nominees who will be delegates under the Government's plan? Theirs is not the only grievance. The Nationalists in the six Ulster counties claiming exclusion are also unrepresented, and other bodies make similar



complaints. Of all these I would ask: does the basis of representation very much matter? Surely the equal balance of parties is far less important than a comprehensive representation of Irish interests, and this is more easily reached by nomination than by election. As the Convention, which, as many have pointed out, would be more properly called a Conference, is constituted, every considerable section of Irishmen should find in it some competent advocate of its views. One essential point is that, if the Convention agrees upon a scheme which does not clearly meet with popular favour, it will unquestionably be submitted by *referendum* or otherwise for popular approval. Lastly, consider the constructive work the Convention has to do. While every delegate will be competent to criticize its report, those who will have the necessary special knowledge for drafting a bill will be exceeding

few. One Alexander Hamilton would do the whole job. No one who knows the way such work has to be done would be surprised either by a good report from a bad Convention or a bad report from a good Convention.

#### THE CASE FOR AN ALL-IRELAND SUPPORT

The conclusion, then, that I reach is that, in times of great difficulty, the Government have made an honest attempt to enable us to settle the political question for ourselves. They have striven to bring together a body of Irishmen sufficiently representing the main currents of Irish opinion to bespeak favourable consideration for decisions as to which they are unanimous, and to make a strong case for those at which they arrive by a substantial majority. It has been suggested, I know, that it is nothing more than a clever trick to put Ireland in the wrong by proving

to the world that, in the words of Lord Dufferin's joke at our expense, "the Irish don't know what they want, and won't be happy till they get it." The suggestion comes from those who foster that undying hatred of England which, if it does not exclude, most assuredly renders barren their love for Ireland. To such I would say the England of the war is wholly unlike any England that has ever been — as unlike as is the Lloyd George Government from any of its predecessors. It is dominated by labour. Little time has the British democracy just now to think of Ireland, but I am convinced it wants to do justly by Ireland for its own sake, for Ireland's sake, and out of regard to the opinion of its Allies, especially America and Russia. But, if this view cannot be taken by those I am now addressing, I have another answer. If they really think England is an insidious foe, seeking our de-

struction, why, in the name of common sense, should they fall into the trap which they plainly see when, by simply taking counsel together, the Irish have it in their power to hoist the enemy with his own petard? What, however, concerns us here is that the Convention will meet, and we wish it Godspeed. Far the best service this meeting can do is to appeal to those Irishmen who have determined to remain aloof to reconsider their decision.

AN APPEAL TO THOSE WHO HAVE REFUSED  
CO-OPERATION

To those of our countrymen upon whose willingness to make some sacrifice of individual opinions, the full success of the Convention will depend, I beg leave to address a few friendly words. Of all the abstentions, that of Mr. William O'Brien is to me the most pathetic. When I accepted the invitation to come here to-day

and plead for unity, I had hoped that his mantle would fall upon me, but never dreamed that he would himself cast it off. No man has more consistently stood for the coming together of Irishmen to try and compose their differences, and at least, I looked to him to tell us to make the best of a bad Convention. I can well believe in the "poignant personal sorrow" with which he made his great refusal, and I hope he will see in this meeting a direct appeal to him to reconsider it. He will thus render the greatest service of a life devoted to Ireland.

The abstention of the *Sinn Feiners* is, in a sense, more regrettable, because they are more numerous. In some respects, theirs is the most interesting political party in Irish history. Most other parties depend for their strength upon organization, and this is the weakness of *Sinn Fein*. Its strength is in its idealism, the central idea

being the concentration of all Irish thought and action upon exclusively Irish service. That idea, in some of its implications, leads, unhappily, to extreme courses, but none will question the nobility of an aspiration for which many fine young Irishmen have laid down their lives. But around this central idea seethes every kind of discontent, and it seems to me that the one thing the cool-headed leaders should see their party requires at the moment — indeed, the condition precedent of the realization of any of its aims — is to find its place in the national life. This can only be done by meeting face to face, under conditions favourable to frank discussion, every section of the community to which, in common with every other political party, it aspires to commend its policy. They, I should have thought, would see that the one gleam of hope which has in modern times brightened the

political prospect in Ireland is the recognition by England that the settlement of the Irish question must come from Ireland — from ourselves alone. They, of all Irishmen, should not lightly reject a Convention which, whatever its defects, has at least the merit of being Irish.

I regret, too, more than I can say, the abstention of labour. Irish policies, owing, no doubt, to the domination of the land question, have notably disregarded the workers of both town and country. In a constitutional Convention the voice of those who toil and spin, must be heard. Three capable and authorized spokesmen would do as well as a hundred. All that is wanted is that a watching brief should be held for labour.

IRELAND'S DIFFICULTY, ULSTER'S  
OPPORTUNITY

Strange as it may seem, the solvent for all these discords lies just across the borders to the North. So here, North of the Boyne, and in sight of the Ulster hills, may we not appeal to those Unionists who have earned our respect by agreeing to meet us, to help the cause of peace and goodwill in Ireland by listening with an open mind to any fresh arguments which may be offered to them on this first opportunity for a free and unfettered interchange of view upon the Irish question? Their position in Ireland is to the foreign observer the most anomalous. On the one hand, they appear as a minority claiming to dictate to the majority. I dismiss that charge. They do not want to interfere with us. They have their own version of *Sinn Fein* — they, too, want to



be left to themselves alone. On the other hand, they claim, and they rightly claim, that they have to their credit certain solid achievements, the result of certain solid qualities. There is not a thinking Irishman but admits the achievements and regards the qualities as absolutely indispensable to any prosperous and progressive Ireland in the future. But of all the misunderstandings which curse our unhappy country, the worst is the conviction among these Ulstermen that we of the South and West bear them no good will, and that we so little understand their industrial and commercial activities, that, even with the best intentions in the world, we should inevitably embark upon schemes of legislation and practise methods of administration fatal to their interests. Personally, I think we have neglected the duty of trying to allay — much that we have done has tended to confirm — these fears.

For this reason, when the Ulster crisis was most acute, I elaborated a plan for the temporary inclusion of Ulster in an all-Ireland government for an experimental period, with the right guaranteed by all parties to withdraw if, after a fair trial, the plan did not work, or at any time, if a competent impartial tribunal decided that serious harm was being done to Ulster interests. I thought it most auspicious that Nationalist Ireland seemed willing to accept the compromise, and that fact makes me believe that Ulster Unionists will be astonished at the reception they will get in the Convention. There they will find an honest and unanimous desire not to coerce, but to win, them. All the alternative schemes for the future government of Ireland will be discussed in turn, and discussed in their severely practical, as well as in their sentimental, aspects. Unless I am greatly mistaken, par-

tition in the last analysis may prove to be administratively and financially as distasteful to the North-East as it is for other reasons to the rest of Ireland. And in the course of these practical discussions I confidently believe that a better understanding of the South by the North will inevitably result. It will be seen that our hearts and minds are shown at their worst in a public life dominated by the grievance of its unsettled Question. Other men and other methods will prevail in a self-governing Ireland if only Ulster will play its part.

The real feeling of Southern Ireland to the Northern Province is well expressed in the words of a song which I remember was very popular some forty years ago, called "Strangers Yet." Two whom God had joined together were unnaturally kept apart. One asks:

“ Must it ever more be thus —  
Spirits still impervious?  
Can we never fairly stand  
Soul to soul, as hand in hand?  
Are the bounds eternal set  
To retain us strangers yet? ”

If at the Convention Ulster answers these questions as the whole world hopes she will, she will have saved the country at a critical moment, and done herself lasting honour which Ireland will never forget. The Unionists in three predominantly Nationalist counties of Ulster throughout the South and West, the Nationalists in the six Ulster Unionist counties, and to my personal knowledge, the people of the United States, would all be relieved of not unwarranted misgivings. To the *Sinn Feiners* a shining example would be set, while the Nationalist Party, who, at any rate, have repudiated the idea of coercing Ulster, would feel that those strong, de-

terminated men had bent down to place a wreath on the grave of Willie Redmond, who went over the top with a United Ireland as his heart's desire.

THE END



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