

sion to welcome an unselfish or generous deed at the hands of their rulers. Every so-called "concession" was but the loosening of a fetter. Every benefit sprang from a manipulation of our own money by a foreign Treasury denying us an honest audit of accounts. None was yielded as an act of grace. All were the offspring of constraint, tumult, or political necessity. Reason and argument fell on deaf ears. To England the Union has brought enhanced wealth, population, power, and importance; to Ireland increased taxation, stunted industries, swollen emigration, and callous officialism.

Possessing in this land neither moral nor intellectual pre-eminence, nor any prestige derived from past merit or present esteem, the British Executive claims to restrain our liberties, control our fortunes, and exercise over our people the power of life and death. To obstruct the recent Home Rule Bill it allowed its favorites to defy its Parliament without punishment, to import arms from suspect regions with impunity, to threaten "to break every law" to effectuate their designs, to infect the Army with mutiny, and set up a rival Executive backed by military array to enforce the rule of a caste against the vast majority of the people. The highest offices of State became the guerdon of the organisers of rebellion, boastful of aid from Germany. To-day they are pillars of the Constitution, and the chief instruments of law. The only laurels lacking to the leaders of the mutineers are those transplanted from the field of battle!

Are we to fight to maintain a system so repugnant, and must Irishmen be content to remain slaves themselves after freedom for distant lands has been purchased by their blood?

Heretofore in every clime, whenever the weak called for a defender, wherever the flag of Liberty was unfurled, that blood freely flowed. Profiting by Irish sympathy with righteous causes, Britain, at the outbreak of the war, attracted to her armies tens of thousands of our youth, ere even the Western Hemisphere had awakened to the wail of "small nations."

Irishmen, in their chivalrous eagerness, laid themselves open to the reproach from some of their brethren of forgetting the woes of their own land which had suffered from its rulers, at one time or another, almost every inhumanity for which Germany is impeached. It was hard to bear the taunt that the army they were joining was that which held Ireland in subjection; but fresh bitterness has been added to such reproaches by what has since taken place.

Nevertheless, in the face of persistent discouragements, Irish chivalry remained ardent and aflame in the first years of the war. Tens of thousands of the children of the Gael have perished in the conflict. Their bones bleach upon the soil of Flanders, or moulder beneath the waves of Suva Bay. The slopes of Gallipoli, the sands of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Judea afford them sepulture. Mons and Ypres provide their monuments. Wherever the battle line extends, from the English Channel to the Persian Gulf, their ghostly voices whisper a response to the roll-call of the guardian-spirits of Liberty. What is their reward?

The spot on earth they loved best, the land to which they owed their first duty, and which they hoped their sacrifices might help to freedom, lies unredeemed under an age-long thralldom. So, too, would it forever lie, were every man and every youth within the shores of Ireland to immolate himself in England's service, unless the clamor of a dominant caste be rebuked and stilled.

Yet proof after proof accumulates that British Cabinets continue to be towards our country as conscienceless as ever. They deceive friendly nations throughout the world as to their Irish policy, while withholding from us even the Act of Home Rule which in 1914 was placed on the Statute Book. The recent "Convention" which they composed to initiate reform was brought to confusion by a letter from the Prime Minister diminishing his original engagements.

Such insincere manoeuvres have left an indelible sense of wrong rankling in the heart of Ireland.

Capitulations are observed with French Canadians,

with the Maltese, with the Hindoos, with the Moham-medan Arabs or the African Boers; but never has the word of England, in any capital case, been kept towards the "sister" island.

The Parliaments of Australia and of South Africa—both of which (unlike our ancient Legislature) were founded by British enactments—refused to adopt Conscription. This was well known when the law against Ireland was resolved on. For opposing the application of that law to Irishmen, and while this appeal to you, Sir, was being penned, members of our Conference have been arrested and deported without trial. It was even sought to poison the wells of American sympathy by levelling against them and others an allegation which its authors have failed to submit to the investigation of any tribunal.

To overlay malpractice by imputing to its victims perverse or criminal conduct is the stale but never-failing device of tyranny.

A claim has also been put forward by the British Foreign Office to prevent you, Mr. President, as the head of a great Allied Republic, from acquiring first-hand information of the reasons why Ireland has rejected and will resist Conscription, except in so far as the Military Governor of Ireland, Field-Marshal Lord French, may be pleased to allow you to peruse his version of our opinions.

America's present conflict with Germany obstructs no argument that we advance. "Liberty and ordered peace" we, too, strive for; and confidently do we look to you, Sir, and to America—whose freedom Irishmen risked something to establish—to lend ear and weight to the prayer that another unprovoked wrong against the defenceless may not stain this sorry century.

We know that America entered the war because her rights as a neutral, in respect of ocean navigation, were interfered with, and only then. Yet America in her strength had a guarantee that in victory she would not be cheated of that for which she joined in the struggle. Ireland, having no such strength, has no such guarantee; and experience has taught us that justice (much less gratitude) is not to be wrung from a hostile Government. What Ireland is to give, a free Ireland must determine.

We are sadly aware, from recent proclamations and deportations, of the efforts of British authorities to inflame prejudice against our country. We therefore crave allowance briefly to notice the insinuation that the Irish coasts, with native connivance, could be made a base for the destruction of American shipping.

An official statement asserts that "An important feature in every plan was the establishment of submarine bases in Ireland to menace the shipping of all nations."

On this it is enough to say that every creek, inlet, or estuary that indents our shores, and every harbor, mole, or jetty, is watchfully patrolled by British authority. Moreover, Irish vessels, with their cargoes, crews, and passengers, have suffered in this war proportionately to those of Britain.

Another State Paper palliates the deportations by blazoning the descent of a solitary invader upon a remote island on April 12, heralded by mysterious warnings from the Admiralty to the Irish Command. No discussion is permitted of the tryst of this British soldier with the local coastguards, of his speedy bent towards a police barrack, and his subsequent confidences with the London authorities.

Only one instance exists in history of a project to profane our coasts by making them a base to launch attacks on international shipping. That plot was framed, not by native wickedness but by an English Viceroy, and the proofs are piled up under his hand in British State Papers. For huge bribes were proffered by Lord Falkland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to both the Royal Secretary and the Prince of Wales, to obtain consent for the use of Irish harbors to convenience Turkish and Algerine pirates in raiding sea-going commerce. The plot is old, but the plea of "increasing his Majesty's revenues" by which it was commended is everlasting. Nor will age lessen its significance for the citizens of that Republic which, amidst the tremors and greed of European diplomacy, extir-

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