

and a "wet blanket" seemed to have fallen upon every one. The countess did not contribute to the general comfort by darting anxious looks at her son and angry ones at the chaplain; and to crown all, Curt had turned deadly pale and lay back as if exhausted in an arm-chair, without uttering a word. A general break-up ensued, the company alleging that the convalescent needed repose.

As the Rittmeister arose to take leave, Lily asked him in a whisper, "Does the Circus Karsten remain much longer in Vienna?"

"As far as I can remember the last representation was announced a few days ago. But if you wish it, countess, I can send you more exact information."

"No, no, thank you," said Lily hastily, seeing that the countess was approaching. "I will see. . . I now know."

The Rittmeister, seeing that she did not wish to carry the subject any further, took his leave.

"Now, do tell me, my dear sir, what on earth can have induced you to have alluded in so imprudent a manner to that Karsten girl, before Curt, too, so as to awake all the old reminiscences within him?" This was spoken by the countess to the chaplain in an irritable tone, when, after the departure of the guests, she found herself alone with him.

"Indeed, countess, I am quite sure that he has never forgotten anything, and that his present state is only caused by the same old sorrow," answered the chaplain gravely.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the countess, "the climate made him ill, and now the one thing to do is never to remind him of the past by any allusion to it. For my part, I have always carefully avoided saying a word which might turn his mind to the subject. It's really too provoking," she continued in a still injured tone, "and I was so glad, too, of his being here on that very account!"

"You see, countess, we poor mortals can do very little with all our precautions. Count Curt and Miss Nora have met, and that quite lately."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the countess, "you don't mean it! How is it possible? How did it come about?"

"They met by accident in a railway carriage, as Count Curt was travelling here, and the shock of the meeting caused his relapse. You see, therefore, how far from forgetting her he is, and how powerful his love must still be."

"Alas! alas!" cried the countess. "And now, of all times, when I really thought that my plans were fitting so nicely into one another, and that he would be got into proposing to his cousin very soon."

"Dear countess, believe me and make no plans; you will only frighten him away altogether. Leave the whole matter in the hands of God, and depend upon it He will guide all for the best. You have nothing to hear from Miss Nora, as she has long since given up all kind of hope."

"Oh! if you had only not just contradicted that gentleman! I was so glad that Curt should hear the way in which she is spoken of."

"It was an untruth, and as such could not be allowed to stand," said the chaplain firmly, though gently, for he rather pitied the countess than not in her grief; "I am fully acquainted with all the sad details of the case, and it was my simple duty to speak as I did."

"Why couldn't you have let your connection with the family drop?" continued the countess peevishly, as if to vent her anger upon someone whomsoever it might be. "I was so glad to think that we had done with them once and for all!"

"It was a question of looking after a soul, countess; and that, you know, is one of the duties of my vocation. I saw that the poor girl, beaten about by sorrow and bitterness, was on the point of falling into an abyss, and I endeavored to give her comfort by my words and by my presence, and to save her before it was too late. Had it not been my duty as a priest, it would have been my duty as a man, for I promised her dying

mother not to forsake her child, and, with God's help, I think I succeeded in my endeavor."

"Anyhow, she has not given up riding," observed the countess sharply. "I told you from the very beginning what an unfortunate idea it was to have her educated at the Convent of Brussels, and everything has happened as I had foretold. You may say what you like about it, but what am I to do with my poor son? Would he had remained away!"

"Do nothing at all," said the chaplain impressively. "Indeed, there has been already too much done in the matter. Your son's health and Miss Nora's happiness have already been sacrificed. It's so often the case that, when we run away from one misfortune in our over-anxiety, we fall into another."

But it was not an easy thing to make the countess after her opinion.

(To be continued.)

## The Irish Revolution and How It Came About

(By William O'Brien)

CHAPTER XXX—(Continued.)

What are the definite proposals which press for a solemn reconsideration by all thinking Irishmen?

The first is that an Irishman is not necessarily an *hostis humani generis* who looks for the revision of a Treaty which substitutes for Ireland a Nation a State shorn of Ireland's richest province, laden with a liability of unknown extent for England's National Debt of seven thousands of millions, and forbidden any thought of National Independence with bullies' threats which no other Dominion would brook.

The next is that to make a Truce possible at all it must be an Unconditional Truce. Standing upon the punctilio that the Republicans must first surrender their arms is to condemn the country to the last extremities of an unforgivable blood feud in order to gratify militarist vanity in an infinitely paltry matter. There is no answer to the argument that if Mr. Lloyd George had been equally strait-laced in his first demand for the surrender of arms there could have been no Truce and consequently no Treaty to put the Free State Ministers in power.

If to such an accommodation the existing Ministry interpose an irrevocable Veto there seems to be no alternative but the obvious one of a change of Ministry, accompanied, as it must be, with the corresponding resignations of such of the Republican leaders as may be found to be on opposite grounds equally irreconcilable. The two sets of changes would not involve more than a dozen individuals all told, and of these none but General Mulcahy on the one side, and Mr. de Valera on the other were personally known even by name to the mass of the Irish people up to a few months ago. A hard saying it may be and disagreeable for many. "All things are hard" quoth Heavenly Wisdom itself. There is an undoubted element of cruelty in the proposition, but it demands no greater measure of self-sacrifice and for

the highest patriotic motives than their past and even present sufferings of mind and body must exact. In the last resort public opinion "must be cruel only to be kind" if the nation is not to slip down from danger to destruction. The decree *sic vos non vobis* would simply come to their turn as it did to all others who went before them.

And it is not as if a change of Ministry might imply a rupture with England, as might have happened before the Treaty was the established law of both countries. It can only be altered by slow and deliberate negotiations, English and Irish. The choice of Ministers is a purely domestic concern with which a man of Mr. Bonar Law's shrewd sense would not think of meddling. Indeed the fact that it is Mr. Bonar Law and not Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Winston Churchill who is now to be dealt with is a sufficient reminder that every one of the five British signatories to the Treaty has since been dismissed from office without causing the smallest jar in the relations between the two countries.

Both parties to the Civil War have suffered so atrociously without any compensating results that, the blessings of peace and good fellowship once restored, it is not conceivable that men with a spark of patriotism or human reason should replunge the country into the abyss of fratricide. Undoubtedly other problems will arise with the Truce. The fact has to be faced that there cannot be any tolerable peace until it is made possible for the Republicans freely to re-enter the public life of the country, and this will only be practicable if the oath of allegiance which at present shuts them out from the Parliament of the Twenty-Six Counties is abolished.

You and I may here again insist upon the pettiness of the point in dispute and argue that sworn allegiance to a régime "as by law established" does not forfeit men's freedom to work for a very different one "as by

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