

REVOLUTIONS AND RE-ELECTION

That the Government is playing for a general insurrection in Ireland, recent events strongly suggest (says *The New Witness*). The dismissal of Sir Joseph Byrne, whose appointment was welcomed by all sections of Irish opinion, the steady growth of coercion in every form—all these things show what the Cabinet is aiming at. Exactly what Mr. George hopes to gain by a Revolution is difficult to determine. It is possible that he hopes by an appeal to British patriotism to dam the torrent of dissatisfaction which even the Georgian press cannot mitigate. He may rely on the patience of the English people who, faced with the fact that outraged Ireland was killing British soldiers, and that her ultimate adherence to Bolshevism could be expected, might give him a further lease of power. If he could claim to have saved the integrity of the British Empire even at the expense of thousands of Irish lives and the sacrifice of many soldiers, it may still seem to him that he could win another election. This appears to us the only possible reason for the besotted idiocy of the latest phase of Irish government. It is not alleged that Sir Joseph Byrne failed in his duty; the real reason for his dismissal is, probably, that he is a Catholic, and possesses a level head and a sense of justice, three potent disqualifications for a post under Government.

If Revolution be the end in view, the tactics of the campaign seem hopelessly ineffective. The English people might swallow Mr. George as a saviour twice resurrected who has snatched the Empire from a fiendish people; they will hardly regard him as their deliverer if his prowess is directed, not against the bulk of the Irish nation, but against a few Irish criminals. The murder of Sergeant Sullivan, who appeared as counsel for Casement, could not by the wildest stretch of perfervid imagination have been regarded as a triumph for Sinn Fein. The recent attempt on his life was quite clearly and obviously arranged by a gang of desperadoes uninfluenced by any political motive whatsoever. Yet it has been industriously, though ambiguously, asserted that the crime was instigated by Sinn Fein, who have a special grudge against Sergeant Sullivan for his denunciation of similar outrages.

The application of a modicum of common sense conclusively demonstrates that Sinn Fein could not have been concerned. The society has yet to be proved guilty of desiring or attempting the assassination of their political supporters, and the suggestion that they are incensed by Sergeant Sullivan's indictment of the lawless conduct of a gang of criminals is discounted by the fact that Sinn Fein have themselves declared that the leaders of the gang will be regarded as outlaws and summarily dealt with. Nor is it at all likely that even English density, or rather that density which Mr. George presupposes to exist, would credit such a palpable fable. To try to link up the action of a number of lawless men with an association openly and avowedly working for the independence of their country is an ineptitude which must hopelessly handicap Mr. George's chances of a return to power on the crest of an Irish suppression. For that the present outbreak of crime is one of the effects of the policy of coercion is impossible to dispute. Public feeling in Ireland, as elsewhere, is always against this sort of thing, but public opinion has so stiffened against English government that, rather than assist the officials of Dublin Castle, or in any way recognise their authority, the people refrain from assisting in the capture of the criminals who terrorise the neighborhood.

It is necessary to realise that, once an Irish man or woman approaches an official of the English Government, they become of necessity an object of suspicion to the community. The point where their information would cease to bear on the apprehension of a criminal and commence to affect the safety of Sinn Fein would be difficult and delicate of determination. Once the police were approached a cross-examination would ensue of so searching a character that, in all innocence the informant might be tricked into making a statement which might lead to the arrest of a political leader. Nor would it be of any use to refuse to answer any questions save those directly affecting the suspected criminal. In such a case the witness would draw suspicion on himself and in addition to crystallising the cunning of the police, incur the ill-odor of his compatriots.

It is useless for the *Morning Post* to insist that the present outbreak of crime is the logical result of Sinn Fein's assumption of authority. It is the outcome of a system of coercion under which Irish patriots are practically compelled to shelter Irish criminals, because denunciation, even of a murderer, would entail the recognition of England's right to rule. Sinn Fein, according to our information, is already organising vigilance committees to deal with the ruffians who threaten the lives and the property of rich and poor alike. That these will succeed in

restoring order, and will deal effectively with the criminals concerned, is fairly certain. An organisation which was able to enforce the law forbidding the export of cattle and pigs during a period of the war—a law which, though passed by the British Parliament, the Government were powerless to carry out—is not likely to experience much difficulty in dealing with a disorderly collection of ruffians. Indeed, the formation of vigilance committees seems to be the only possible solution of the present deplorable state of affairs. It speaks well for the natural instinct of the people that under a system of coercion enforced by military occupation so spontaneous a desire has been expressed for the enforcing of order, and that general support is given for the findings of these committees who impose penalties on the breakers of the peace.

Up to the present the Irish people have steadily withstood the impulse towards Revolution, nor do we think it likely that the incidents of the Easter rising will be repeated. If, however, a rising is precipitated, it seems improbable that its suppression would assist Mr. George's return to power. Above all, we are convinced that the English people in whatever circumstance will be able to discriminate between the excesses of a band of criminals bent on loot and indifferent to murder, and the acts of a society formed for the express purpose of liberating their country, and enforcing the redemption of our politicians' broken pledge.

BAR TO U.S. FRIENDSHIP FOR BRITAIN

THE IRISH ISSUE.

"MOST SOLID PHALANX IN AMERICAN POLITICS."

In an article entitled, "Is America Friendly?" "A.G.G.," writing in the *Daily News*, says the most formidable obstacle to American friendship for England is the Irish question. Until that question is satisfactorily out of the way there can be no secure friendship between the two countries.

"The influence of the Irish upon American politics is much greater than their numbers would suggest" (he continues). "Those numbers are great—not less than a tenth of the population, probably much more—but they are the most solid phalanx in American life. They have the acutest political instinct of any section of the community, and in the party caucuses, both municipal and national, they are generally masters.

"Around them cohere all the anti-British influences, which are now reinforced by the great German population, which is not less considerable than that of the Irish.

Facts Withheld From British.

"It is deplorable that there should apparently be a conspiracy of silence to conceal from the country the magnitude of this menace to Anglo-American relations. It is the great, glaring, ominous fact of American politics. It meets you everywhere. It shouts at you from the anti-British Hearst press wherever you may be—in New York, in Boston, in Chicago, in St. Louis, in far-away San Francisco.

"De Valera makes the progress of a popular hero through the country, and the British public's ears are stuffed with cotton wool to prevent the fact percolating to its mind. In Boston I saw a whole issue of the Hearst paper devoted to a malignant attack on this country and its misgovernment here, there, and everywhere; its designs on American credit, and so on.

"The Mayor of New York is an Irishman, and the mayors of most of the other great cities are Irishmen or the nominees of Irishmen. Judge Cohalan, of the Supreme Court of New York State, travels about delivering passionate diatribes against England, and half the Senate plays up to the same tune.

"The suppressed nationalism of Ireland bursts out in blotches on the face of America, and America is angry with the blotches, and angrier still with the cause of the blotches."

Hawera

For the last 12 months (writes a correspondent) excellent work has been done locally by St. Agnes' branch of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The members meet in St. Joseph's Schoolroom every Tuesday, and engage in sewing, the result of which has been that 149 articles of clothing were completed and forwarded to the Sisters of Compassion at Wellington for the inmates of their institutions. The sick are also visited, and cases of distress brought under the notice of the society are attended to. At the recent bazaar, held in the Winter Show buildings, the members of the society conducted a fancy stall, at which they cleared the splendid sum of £202.