

"Besides, I am advised — has no rights of extra-territoriality, and in case of war will never be allowed to leave England. He may escape hanging, but you and I won't. No, he will have to think of something better than my signet-ring, if he is going to best England."

Before I could repeat my visit to Ebury Street, Komaroff's troops were withdrawn from Penjdeh, there was an end of a war which probably Russia never had any notion of allowing to be precipitated, and with it there was an end of our castles in the air. The incident is only worth recalling as an illustration—of which the secret archives of the first Boer War will supply a companion picture still more realistic—of that mixture of daring in extremities with no less daring moderation in hours of victory which was the essence of Parnell's character as a leader. And he was not at all too contemptuous of the military inadequacy of the Irish-American expedition. It could not have sufficed to overrun Ireland, but it was Parnell's calculation that taken in connection with gigantic dangers on the Indian frontier a descent on Ireland by dashing Phil Sheridan must quite surely startle Gladstone into some epoch-making proffer of Irish freedom, and few who knew Gladstone and knew Parnell could have much doubt that on such a *Dies irae* the bargain would have been adventured and would have been perfected. But to return from this interlude of the outlaw side of Parnell's strategy.

The two heaviest calamities that befell the Irish cause in our time—"the Split" of 1890 and the sacrifice of the unprecedented opportunity of an Irish settlement by consent in 1903—arose, the first of them from a tenderness for English Liberalism, approaching to a vice, and the second from a wholly vicious incapacity to collaborate with English Toryism in doing the work of Ireland. Parnell was weakened by no such foible of love or hate in his dealings with Englishmen. Within twelve months, an Irish leader who durst not raise his voice in Ireland a few months previously had the leaders of both English Parties flattering him with more or less shy approaches to Home Rule, and he encouraged the advances of both of them with consummate skill and without treachery to either, and of the successful competitor constituted a world-apostle of Irish independence. Be it always borne in mind that he had only a couple of dozen even of the Irish members at his back (the rest being palsied place-hunters of the "nominal Home Ruler" type), that the actual balance of power as between English Parties, save by some chance almost as long to be waited for as the blossom of a century plant, hardly entered into his dreams, and no individual worth counting on either Front Bench could yet be got to whisper "Home Rule" except in guilty secrecy. What might have been his achievements, if like his successors in the "Home Rule Parliament" which finally wrecked Home Rule he could command the Division Lobbies and make and unmake Prime Ministers as the interests of Ireland dictated—if in addition to all that he had the entire Liberal Party and far the greater portion of the Tory Party hungering for a great historic agreement with Ireland!

The Spencer régime was scarcely a fortnight fallen, when we had Chamberlain proposing his tour in Ireland with Sir Charles Dilke under our auspices to promulgate the proposal of an expansible "National Council," touching which "I would not hesitate to transfer the consideration and solution of the Education question and the Land question entirely to an Irish Board altogether independent of English government influence, which would, of course, be also invested with powers of taxation in Ireland for those strictly Irish purposes." And we had the new Tory Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carnarvon, making (and meaning) a speech in the House of Lords foreshadowing something very much more majestic in the shape of Irish liberty. The repulse of Chamberlain's essay to enthrone himself as our National Patron Saint had, perhaps, its drawbacks; but in the state of irritability then prevailing between the Liberal leaders, it was for us perforce a choice between Gladstone and Chamberlain, and it is easy enough now to understand that, had we elected differently, Ireland must have shambled along obscurely in the train of a Radical Jack Cade, and the Gladstonian Home Rule epos might never have been written. For any damage suffered from Chamberlain's ill-humor we were, at all events, consoled by a speech a week or two later in Leeds by Mr. Herbert Gladstone. The speaker dismissed with contempt the taunt

of the party wirepullers that the Irish had sold themselves to the Tories. He recognised Parnell's right and duty to extract the best terms he could for his own country from any and every combination with English parties.

"He told the Tories it was no good half trusting the Irish people. The proper policy was to throw to the wind all coercive legislation and prove their trust in the Irish people by allowing them to manage their own affairs. . . . His point was that for good or ill Mr. Parnell represented the Irish people, and the Tories must settle with him a system of government based entirely upon the people's wishes."

(To be continued.)

A Catholic Laboring Man's Reconstruction Programme

This is the season for inventory-taking, and it may not be amiss, therefore, to take stock of our social reconstruction programmes and their results (writes a Catholic laboring man in the *Fortnightly Review*, St. Louis, U.S.A.)

I do not mean to say that in the three years that have elapsed since the period of reconstruction began, it should be possible to place one's finger on actual results. Nevertheless, certain definite tendencies should be making themselves felt in consequence of these pronouncements. It must not be overlooked that at the time of promulgation conditions favored the workers. The programme of our bishops, based as it was, primarily, on wages, hours, and working conditions, was launched in favorable weather. Since then storms have broken loose, heavy storms, indeed; the ship's compass might well be consulted to determine our present bearings, though the storm has by no means abated as yet.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to retain our jobs, with immense reduction in our purchasing power—in consequence of reduction in hours as well as wages—have long since ceased to think of "the principle of organisation," the exterior conditions of our work, and the minimum of wage. At least we are not thinking of them in the same way that the professors of economics and sociology think of them. But we have wondered and are discussing, in our own informal and inadequate manner, the relationship of these things to real social and industrial reform.

I do not mean to give the impression that we are discontented with, or inappreciative of, the efforts of our leaders. A group of Catholic laboring men can surely discuss the bearings of the principles of our social reform movements, even though they come from our spiritual leaders, without endangering our reputation for loyalty to the Church we love. It is hardly more than natural that we should discuss the value of such principles in the face of events of the past year.

Much has been made in Catholic circles of the pronouncement of the great Pope Leo regarding working men's associations, or unions, as they are called in this country; little, however, has been made of his statement that there must be a juster distribution of the goods of this world. The difficulty would seem to lie in an exaggerated notion of the results to be obtained from the labor union movement. I can safely say, from my experience and relationship with many workers, that the workers themselves do not place much confidence in organisations as a means to a better order of things. They constitute a source of protection against the tyranny of those who hold the balance of power, though they have also been used unjustly by Labor during times unfavorable to the employer. In fact they perpetuate and accentuate the division of classes, and are incapable, under the present constitution of industrial society, to help effectively to a better ordering of things. I believe I am correct, therefore, when I state that the laborer expects little from "the principle of organisation," though organisations are perhaps necessary, for the time being, as a means of protection.

The present period of depression has brought out clearly the futility of the whole labor union movement. A philosophy of action having as its objectives higher wages, better working conditions, and shorter hours, is obviously bootless at a time like the present. Unless we can get at

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