

Now let us take what I may call an example on the right wing, an extreme example of ill-doing, affecting the very life of the State and yet kept dark. I mean the accusation against Lloyd George of treason in 1917.

To-day men begin to take that once incredible piece of work for a piece of actual history. The accusation was of course known to the Continent, and even to many people here, at the time; but it was first printed in the most important of English weekly reviews as a known fact in the earlier part of this year. It was repeated shortly after in an important monthly review, also as a known fact, and the politicians have allowed the thing to go by default without taking up the challenge! In the year 1917 Lloyd George attempted to go behind the back of the French and the Italians and the Americans and to make a separate peace with the Germans. That is the statement trumpeted through the world—and the blow is received without reply.

How many Englishmen know that? Yet all history will take it for granted. For even if at this late hour he were to prosecute and try to put me (for instance) in prison for pointing out the accusation under which he lay, it would be too late to recover confidence. All history will in a few years gravely record the fact that in the very agony of the Great War the English Government, or rather its financial masters, secretly tried to betray its own people and its allies. It will be as much a thing taken for granted as Charles II.'s subsidy from Louis XIV.

Well, that is the state of affairs. In matters purely personal (yet of vast interest to justice and common morals) to matters concerning the immediate salvation of the State, there is an ubiquitous corruption, dependent upon organised secrecy and all the forces of the State—particularly the courts of justice—are used to prevent Englishmen from knowing what is going on.

There is no remedy for such a state of things but information. Is not that clear? Is it not self-evident? It is not axiomatic?

I mean, of course, there is no *partial* remedy. There are theoretic remedies as many as you will. One might imagine a popular movement miraculously supporting some perfectly honest reformer who should make himself a king, and proceed to punish the whole gang as they deserve. Or one might imagine one member of the gang to go mad or suffer conversion and to publish important truths and send them out broadcast. But that is to imagine something quite out of the real world.

As things are, the only remedy is perpetual, repeated, insistent exposure, in the hope that the area which it covers shall at last grow sufficient to create a really awkward and efficient opposition. That opposition need not be a majority, not the one-hundredth of a majority. It need only be of a sufficient number and of sufficient driving power to frighten instead of merely annoying the little group that fill their pockets and satisfy their private ambitions at the expense of the nation.

But there's the rub! In this paper the thing is done, but it is done restrictedly. No one dares quote this paper, though all Fleet Street reads it. Sooner or later what it says becomes common knowledge—for instance, all the world knows now what to think of Marconi Isaacs, the Viceroy of India. All the world knew what he did; and the knowledge has effectually damned him. But at the time we were exposing this fellow and his brother there was a dead boycott.

See the result. We had enough power to make the nastiness enter history. We had not enough power to cleanse the country of it while such a purge might yet have been of service. We were like men who point out a poison but have no power to prevent its being administered or to check its results.

So it is to-day. All European histories half a generation hence will talk of 1917 and the attempted treason at the very crisis of the war. It will be as much a part of the European story as Titus Oates or Campo-Basso. Meanwhile the harm is done and it will have worked out its full effects upon this unfortunate people long before the remedy can catch it up. It has already given us Cannes and Genoa. It will bring much more.

It was very wisely said to me the other day: "If any one rich man would have the patriotism to lose money for one year on a daily paper that told the truth, England might yet be saved."

You will look in vain for such a rich man. But is there not perhaps some other instrument which might be brought into use, subsidiary to the work done by the *New Witness*?

Could we not have public meetings?

Evildoers are sometimes more afraid of a public meeting than of a newspaper. There is something about the open appeal, the chance audience, the presence at such affairs of people who never read political matter, the collective enthusiasm provoked which under some circumstances will have more effect than any printed word of the same extension. A daily paper, for instance, may sell half a million copies and yet have less effect in some pronouncement it makes than a large public meeting of five thousand.

I suggest that we should organise a series of public meetings to supplement the work of the *New Witness*. The difficulty in this as in all other attempts at reform is money. But I think that can be got over. There are fairly large halls to be hired at no very great expense. Telling the truth by word of mouth (unlike the setting up of it in type and the printing of it on paper) costs nothing. As for the distribution of the truth, the meetings would of course be boycotted by the general press exactly as this paper is boycotted; but a public meeting has got a wonderful power of spreading news. For one man that hears the actual words spoken, twenty men soon hear the echo of those words; that is not the case with print.

So let us organise public meetings upon the political state of the country, domestic and foreign.

I may be told that if we do there will be prosecutions? Well, nothing could possibly be more serviceable to England than prosecutions in such a connection—but I am afraid the culprits will cling desperately to plain lying and silence. It better suits their calibre.

Easter in London

A million people are supposed to have left London to spend the Easter holidays either on the Continent or at the seaside and other resorts. That left a bare six millions or so behind, of whom a very generous proportion found their way to the churches, to judge by the crowded congregations seen during Holy Week and Easter. To judge by the closed doors, Good Friday is not a popular holy day amongst the Nonconformists; but both the Catholic and Anglican churches were crowded. During Holy Week London sees a variety of special observances. There is, for example, the distribution of the Royal Maundy in Westminster Abbey on Maundy Thursday, when the prelates and high officers of the Court who distribute the purses gird themselves with towels—a reminder of the old Catholic days when the Sovereign and the bishops washed the feet of certain poor men in imitation of Christ's action on the night of the Last Supper. This ceremony is now performed in Westminster Cathedral, where the Cardinal Archbishop, assisted by the members of the Metropolitan Chapter, goes through the ceremony of the *Mandatum* according to the Ritual. Of Pontifical ceremonies during the Holy Week and Easter there is no lack. Six metropolitan archbishoprics in Great Britain and 17 episcopal sees, are great ecclesiastical centres where the solemn ceremonies beginning on Palm Sunday reach their climax in the Pontifical Mass of Easter Day. Menevia is still without a Bishop, and the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle is still seriously ill; so in both these dioceses there were no pontifical ceremonies.

Westminster, as usual, was crowded to its doors at all the functions, and both the long ceremonies, the Mass and Blessing of the Oils on Maundy Thursday, and the special functions of Holy Saturday, drew large numbers of men, though both these days are supposed to be business days.

The coming of the wireless brought to many a home the great message of Good Friday, where otherwise the day might have passed without any mention of the Story of the Redemption. During the evening the broadcasting station sent out by wireless the Gospel narrative of the Passion, interspersed with hymns. It was a solemn and inspiring moment to "listen in" and hear coming from the void such sonorous phrases as "Pilate therefore took Jesus, and when he had scourged Him. . ." The effect was very striking, and must have brought a new meaning of the sacred story to many.—*Catholic News Service.*

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