

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF THE IRISH QUESTION.

THE very closeness of our relations with England has been a cause of friction between us, our very similarities have produced jealousies; but notwithstanding these jealousies and this friction, I do not believe the mass of Americans desire to have the British Empire broken up and her influence in Europe lessened. We like to criticise her, we like to ridicule those who indiscriminately imitate everything that is English; but after all there are certain fundamental qualities and instincts of the race common to us both on which we pride ourselves, on which we build our hope of national continuance, and which we wish to see extended in the world. There is a certain sense of justice and fair play, a love of individual freedom exceeding the love of present ease and comfort, and a detestation of unfairness, from which have sprung the specific institutions of the *habeas-corpus* acts, public trial by jury and other rights of the accused, the freedom of the press and public debate, the right of petition and the consent of the governed which Americans took with them when they came to this land and have cherished ever since as their fondest possessions.

We are cousins by blood. The population of the United States has a much larger percentage of Englishmen and descendants of Englishmen than of any other race. At the adoption of our Constitution the inhabitants were almost wholly of English and Scotch descent. The few Irish were not Catholic Celts, but Scoto-Irish Presbyterians from Ulster. From 1787 to 1847 there was very little immigration into the United States, not exceeding a million in all, and of that England furnished a good portion. Out of a total white population of 43,400,000 in 1880, undoubtedly 32,600,000, or about 75 per cent, were natives, born of native parents or those born of British and British-American parents. The Irish immigrants and children of Irish make up but a trifle over ten per cent of the white population. The good feeling *au fond*, the cousinly sentiments, are, it seems to me, mutual. During our Civil War we had, it is true, to bear many galling things from part of the English press and from persons high in political and social life, even now hard to overlook; but, on the other hand, we do not forget that the large majority of the English people favored the

Federal Government of the United States. While several public meetings were held in England in favor of the American Union from 1861 to 1865, not one public meeting was held in favor of the side of secession. After the war was over, England was willing to arbitrate and pay for her neglect in letting the "Alabama" sail from her ports, and felt, as a member of the English cabinet said at the time, though the award was far too high, that it was but very little to pay if thereby the friendship of America was gained.

Tatnall, our American commodore, put it very well in 1859, when, siding with the English in a desperate fight on the Pecho River, in China, he exclaimed, "Blood is thicker than water." Politicians in this country sometimes try to score a point in an argument by playing on the lingering resentment toward England; and others of them and certain newspapers are so placed that they see a gain in appealing to an extreme separatist wing of Irishmen. The silent, unobtruded views of the great majority, however, cannot be judged fairly by the louder clamors of the few. There is, moreover, a fraction, by no means small, of the American people which takes the view of the English Conservatives and Unionists and sees nothing but danger to England and to Ireland herself in an Irish Parliament. On the whole, however, among the Americans who have given the subject attention there is, without any desire for separation or secession, great sympathy with a movement to obtain for Ireland some substantial form of local self-government. These Americans have what seems to them good historical grounds for this sympathy, and strong reasons drawn from their own experience for thinking that this self-government on local affairs would be a stronger bond of union between England and Ireland than any force applied by a British Parliament.

It is sometimes asked why the Americans, who so objected to any interference in their Civil War on the part of England, should now turn around and interest themselves in the Irish struggle for home rule. If it were separation for Ireland that interested us, the comparison would be more apt. During the Rebellion the Southern States were in arms against the Union, seeking to force the recognition of a separate government. Interference in such a case would have been a direct attack on the integrity and power of this country. The form of government to which the Southern States came back, and which has worked so well ever since, is the very form of government which is now desired for Ireland; that is, we object to a neutral power helping to split apart its neighbor. But sympathy with plans to secure the

practical consent of the governed is sympathy with a fundamental English institution which we and the English have ever cherished and fought for. We think, too, our own experience with local self-government in our several States, as a means both of avoiding discord and of giving strength to our Union, furnishes us a right to an opinion that a similar plan might be for the great advantage of our English cousins, who, as we know, have not had the same object-lessons before their eyes that have been before ours.

I used the words "practical consent of the governed." Some one will immediately reply that Ireland has a representation in Parliament larger in proportion than either England or Scotland. True; but passing beyond this mere tribute to the principle, it has to be admitted that Ireland does not practically control her local affairs, and with that admission comes the assertion that she ought not to control them; and when it is asked, "Why ought she not?" it is answered, "Because she is not fit to rule herself." This is the vital point. It is this assertion, that she ought not, that gives rise to our historic sympathy. The parallel between our own struggle for the consent of the governed one hundred and seventeen years ago and that of Ireland now is certainly striking. What is the position of Irish home-rulers to-day? They wish to keep up complete union with England, to have an Irish Parliament with defined powers limited to local affairs; and even in these, the Imperial Parliament will still have the power, if its exercise is needed, to abrogate any law passed by the Irish Parliament. Tariff and excise, questions of peace and war, and other matters wholly of common and national interest, it is admitted, should be in the hands of the joint British and Irish or the Imperial Parliament. The principle seems to be that matters of general application ought to be settled by a general parliament, matters of special and local application by a local parliament; admitting, of course, exceptions, some to be temporary and some permanent. The chief complaint of the Irish is that, though represented in the British Parliament, they are wholly outvoted on local matters, and the wishes of the great majority of their representatives are ignored, while quite as serious is the fact that the Parliament in London is so engrossed with English, Scotch, and Imperial affairs that Irish matters have heretofore been woefully neglected.

The cause of our colonial ancestors and of Ireland to-day is substantially the same. In Ireland, as with us, the English government overlooks the real issue, and tries to pacify discontent by giving unasked-for favors with one hand and by forcibly repressing the de-

mands for local self-rule with the other. The details of the situation with our ancestors differ somewhat from those in Ireland. We had no representation in the British Parliament, and Ireland has. We had local parliaments, though deprived of their powers; Ireland has not even this. Our ancestors, however, did not desire representation in an English Parliament. Though the popular cry was against taxation without representation, the representation sought was an effective and substantial one, and not its mere shadow. The colonists saw clearly that a few American members of Parliament in a helpless minority at Westminster would be of no service. A recent American historian speaks of the British Parliament of that time as a body in which the colonists "neither are nor practically can be represented"; and the members of the first Congress of the colonies on September 5, 1774, in their celebrated "Declaration of Rights and Liberties," after affirming allegiance to Great Britain, and their rights as "Englishmen" to be represented in the taxing body, stated in the fourth article "that the people of these colonies are not, and from their local circumstances cannot, be represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain," and in the next article they stated where they wished to be represented, namely, in their "respective legislatures." This is precisely the desire of Ireland to-day.

It is often supposed in England, as Thackeray asserted, that it was unwillingness to pay taxes that caused the revolution of the American colonies. Our contest was not over the taxes, but over the method of imposing them. It was in reality the very unwillingness on the part of England to see beyond taxes and acknowledge the claim for representation that caused our separation from her. She forgot that during the French war there was never any complaint that the colonies had failed to take, of their own free consent, their fair share of the burden both in money and troops. After that war was over, England for the first time undertook to tax the colonies without their consent, and then for the first time there was trouble. The actual taxation imposed by England was in itself reasonable enough. England had expended £60,000,000 in the war against France and the Indians on the continent of America. She asked the colonies to pay no part of this, not even the interest on it. Nothing from the proposed taxes was to be taken to England, but on the contrary England proposed to pay for two-thirds of the expense of protecting the colonies, and desired to raise only the remaining one-third from the colonies themselves, to be expended wholly in America. What could be more reasonable?

The much-resented "stamp tax" was but to raise the modest sum of £100,000 for these colonial purposes only, a mere bagatelle in comparison with what the colonies had just spent in the English-French wars of their own free will. There was nothing especially obnoxious in a stamp act of itself. The Massachusetts colonial legislature had passed one and enforced it for a year, some time previous to the English stamp act of 1765. It was the passage of the act *without the consent* of the colonists that excited alarm and opposition. It cost the British government £12,000 to try to enforce this stamp act, and not one farthing was ever collected under it in any of the thirteen colonies. That the amount of the tax had nothing to do with the trouble England still would not see, though the colonies so stated in explicit language, and in their acts went so far as to object to the Crown's paying the salaries of the colonial judges and governors, preferring to pay them themselves. At meetings held in Faneuil Hall, Boston, on October 28 and November 2, 1772, resolutions were actually passed against the payment of the judges' salaries by the Crown, and Chief-Justice Oliver was impeached for accepting his salary from the Crown instead of from the colonies, as it was said to be "in derogation of fundamental rights." In reply to appeals for home rule, England repealed all the taxes excepting a nominal one on tea, which was retained "as a matter of principle." At this time probably no country in the world was so lightly taxed as the American colonies, and never before or since have they escaped with so little taxation. What, then, was there left for the colonies to complain of? Yet the colonists were not satisfied, and England could not see why.

To-day in Ireland it is not the land question, but the denial of the right of home rule that is at the bottom of the whole agitation. The admittedly bad system of land tenure is but an illustration of English incompetency to deal with Irish affairs through an English Parliament. The recent extraordinary Irish land acts and the Irish land-purchase bill are but admissions of past delinquency. The British government, instead of giving home rule, has done and is doing more for the tenants than is probably wise economically or than is according to sound principles of self-support.

Taxation was not the only legislative act the American colonists complained of as made without their consent. The mere "declaratory act," stating the full power of the British Parliament to make laws binding on the American colonies, provoked counter-affirmations of no such authority without our consent. The "mutiny acts," quarter-

ing troops on us; the "navigation acts," limiting our trade and the vessels in which and places to which we could carry our goods; the Townsend acts, appointing commissioners to execute trade laws and the Crown's interference with our efforts to prevent slavery—all special acts applying to the colonies only and made without their consent—were also causes of discontent. But was there any "boycott" in those days? Surely there was, under the head of "non-importation agreements," signed quite generally, agreeing to buy no goods imported from England till our "rights" were recognized. Circulars were printed and notices posted warning persons not to trade with such and such merchants who had imported goods from England. As nearly two-fifths of the people of the colonies were Tories, or at least inclined that way, more or less of threatening had to be used to carry out these non-importation agreements. Indeed, the lives of many of the Tories were rendered so intolerable that they left the colonies. There was, however, no refusal to pay rents, no "plan of campaign"! There was something very like it. American merchants owed some £4,000,000 in the way of private debts to English merchants. This was a large sum in those days. There was no claim of injustice in these debts, no doubt as to the amount due, and yet solely to force the recognition of public rights there was a general and successful agreement to withhold the payment of these debts. They were paid after the Revolutionary War was over, but during the periods of agitation prior to the war the local courts were incapable of forcing their collection.

Were there any illegal meetings in defiance of law? Yes, there were numerous such meetings, especially in Virginia and Massachusetts, protesting against acts of Parliament and orders of the Crown, and at them many revolutionary sentiments were proclaimed. Such sentiments may sound like patriotism at this distance of time after the successful issue of the war for independence, but in England at that time they appeared in precisely the same light as appear parts of the speeches of the Irish agitators to-day. Six years before war broke out, George Washington counselled the "use of arms" to resist the encroachments of our "lordly masters" on our liberties, though, he added, "arms should be the last resort," while I doubt if any sentence of any Irish leader can be found to match the famous words of Patrick Henry, uttered in May, 1765: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third [cries of "Treason"]—may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it." To counteract this "boycotting," this "plan of campaign," these "il-

legal meetings," to translate the old names into modern phrases, the government resorted to what would now be called "coercion." The attitude of the government was to abolish all the taxes except a trivial one on tea, retained as "a matter of principle," and to refuse to grant the home rule because, as Lord North said, the conduct of the Americans had been such as to prevent an entire compliance with their wishes, or, as the Earl of Hillsborough said in 1768, on the non-rescinding of the circular-letter which the colonies had addressed to the Crown, because "the Crown must be supported, or we sink into a state of anarchy."

Troops were at last sent to America to enforce the laws, aid the officers of the Crown, and protect the Tories. General Gage was sent to carry out this policy, with his troops, because, as Lord Percy said, he was "the proper man to do it." In addition to this, Boston had to be made an example of for its leadership in resistance. The Boston Port Bill of March 14, 1774, was enacted, closing the port till compensation was made for the tea destroyed in the tea riots. Another act was passed, for the appointment of the governor's councillors by the Crown, in place of election by the people; for the appointment and removal by the governor, who was an appointee of the Crown, of the judges of the Superior Courts, justices of the peace, and other minor officers, and, with the consent of the council, of the sheriffs. The governor's permission was made necessary for the holding of town meetings, except for the election of town officers. It was also provided by another act that offenders and witnesses might be transported for trial to other colonies or to England. Thus Massachusetts became a "proclaimed district." The trial by jury was greatly diminished in all the colonies by extending the jurisdiction of the royal courts of admiralty. "Writs of assistance" were authorized by acts of Parliament, under which search could be made for suspected goods without warrant. "New England restraining acts" were passed, cutting down the trade and fisheries of New England. By such measures it was intended to "bring the colonies to reason"; not because the colonies were wholly wrong in their demands, but because the statesmen of those days believed they ought first to whip the colonies into obedience and afterward listen to the justice of their complaints.

All these measures and others like them were met with further resistance, such as driving the Crown officers to the war-ships; riots; wrecking houses and destroying property; and in some cases, notably of the "regulators" of North Carolina and of the burning of the

"Gaspee" in Rhode Island, with bloodshed. Conflicts with the troops occurred, the most noticeable being at Gray's Wharf, March 2, 1770, and the "Boston Massacre" three days later. In short, to quote from a recent American historian, the colonists did "commit disgraceful acts of violence upon property and against persons of the most estimable character." Another recent American writer says, "It is wiser to pass by such things with regret than to pause over their details," etc. The other colonies sent contributions of money to assist the Bostonians, and Boston was officially declared to be in a state of "rebellion."

But were not these acts of violence and rebellion frowned down by the leaders in the colonies? The boycotting of English goods was taken part in not only by the hot-headed, but these non-importation agreements were signed by the leading men of the day, as by Washington, Jefferson, Randolph, and Henry. Even the more riotous acts were not interfered with by the local colonial authorities, and, to quote again from a recent American historian, "men of influence were either silent or insincerely condemned" these acts, and others "did not scruple to avail themselves of popular violence." In such a state of affairs is it any wonder that the British government, which was blind to the moral issue, should think, not only that our people were rioters and law-breakers, but that they were totally unfit to govern themselves? The leaders seemed all to be agitators. The fact was that the situation made a demand for agitators. Afterward, when the needs of local self-government made a demand for statesmen, statesmen appeared, and sometimes in the very persons of the former agitators, and we have the splendid Constitution of the United States, produced by a people who shortly before seemed unfit to keep the peace.

But this splendid Constitution of the United States did not follow immediately after the Treaty of Paris, nor was it adopted without marked dissension. If the argument is used to-day that because the Irish have troublous times among themselves they are not fit for home rule, we should think of the times between the close of the Revolutionary War and the adoption of the Constitution, a period so fitly called the "critical period of American history." We then gave our English cousins a chance to say: "We told you so. You see you can't govern yourselves." In revenge for the massacres by savage Indians, instigated by English sympathizers called "Tories," we, in time of peace, robbed and insulted some and shot and hanged others. A large part of Massachusetts was for months in the hands of a mob headed by Daniel Shays. The courts were broken up and the mob burned

barns and seized all the plunder they could lay hands on. The National Congress was driven out of Philadelphia by a mob largely made up of soldiers claiming their pay. A general rebellion of the disbanded army was stopped only by Washington's consummate tact and great influence. Repudiation of State debts and paper-money schemes were rife, and meanwhile the country seemed to be "drifting toward anarchy." Soon, however, the good sense of the people prevailed; and upon the adoption of the Constitution, with its strong central government and well-defined local powers for the States, peace and good order prevailed. Thus our own history has given us grounds for a peculiar sympathy with any cause of home rule, and a reason for not indicting the whole Emerald Isle for the excesses of the Irish agitators.

It is frequently remarked that if home rule with union is established, it will be but the entering wedge for complete separation. Let me recall two of our experiences. Home rule with union having been *refused* the American colonists, war ensued; and the *refusal continuing*, the Declaration of Independence followed, but only after the war had lasted a year and a quarter. After our successful rebellion, home rule was granted the other British colonies, and they have remained loyal. In the recent reconstruction after the Civil War, the Southern States were in the end given home rule, and all has gone on harmoniously since; but for twelve years United States troops were kept in the South to maintain order. The presence of these troops as government police caused trouble. A pretty severe hit on the head made by a home policeman to enforce a home-made law is a small matter, bringing but contempt on the wounded; but a hit so slight as to be healed by a bit of sticking-plaster, if given by a policeman or soldier sent by a distant government to enforce special laws not consented to, leaves a stinging sense of indignation behind and makes the sufferer a hero and a martyr in the eyes of his neighbors. As long as the United States troops were in the South, we had the frightful barbarities, bloodshed, and horrors of the Ku-Klux. The troops were withdrawn under President Hayes in 1877, the Ku-Klux melted away, and the horrors have ceased. Taking, then, our own history and the continuing evidence before our eyes of the force for union there is in local self-government on local affairs in all our States, it cannot but seem to us that some sort of effectual home rule for Ireland is what will alone unite Ireland in heart, as well as in name, with the British Empire, to the mutual advantage of both parts of the union.

RICHARD H. DANA.

THE FOLLY OF THE SILVER AGITATION.

THE so-called Sherman Act of 1890 was a compromise between the bimetallists and the free-silver men. It requires the executive officers of the Government to buy four and one-half million ounces of silver at market price each month and to issue Treasury notes in payment. These at present are redeemable at the will of the holder in gold dollars, which have a uniform value the world over. How long we may be able to continue this liberal exchange of hard cash for a fluctuating commodity without peril to the credit of our nation is a question of serious importance.

Silver ceased to be a measure of value and virtually became merchandise after the Franco-Prussian war, when Germany followed the example set by England and demonetized it. The tables of the world's production which Mr. Edward O. Leech, director of the mint, furnished in his official report, show how abundant silver has become:

During—	Troy Ounces of 480 Grains, Fine Silver.	Commercial Value.	Value of the World's Gold Product.
1873.....	63,267,000	\$82,120,000	\$96,200,000
1874.....	55,300,000	70,673,000	90,750,000
1875.....	62,262,000	77,578,000	97,500,000
1876.....	67,753,000	78,322,000	103,700,000
1877.....	62,648,000	75,240,000	114,000,000
1878.....	73,476,000	84,644,000	119,000,000
1879.....	74,250,000	83,383,000	109,000,000
1880.....	74,791,000	85,636,000	106,500,000
1881.....	78,890,000	89,777,000	103,000,000
1882.....	86,470,000	98,230,000	102,000,000
1883.....	89,177,000	98,986,000	95,400,000
1884.....	81,597,000	90,817,000	101,700,000
1885.....	91,652,000	97,564,000	108,400,000
1886.....	93,276,000	92,772,000	106,000,000
1887.....	96,124,000	94,031,000	105,775,000
1888.....	108,827,000	102,283,000	110,197,000
1889.....	125,420,000	117,263,000	123,489,000
1890.....	134,380,000	141,100,000	120,475,000
1891.....	143,550,000	141,827,000	125,300,000

Last year the production of silver was more than twice as large as in 1876, when the Germans exchanged a great portion of their stock for gold, and it was more than four and a half times the thirty-one