

'having acquired certain doctrinal views which are wholly incompatible with the teaching of the Church of England, he had the courage and the honesty to leave the church for that communion to which such doctrines as the Sacrifice of the Mass properly belong. They have no place within the Church of England, and well would it be for the church and its witness to the world if those who hold them would follow Monsignor Benson's example. The Church of England would be infinitely stronger if all who hold the whole system of Roman doctrine would leave us and make their submission to Rome.' It would certainly be far more honest and consistent if the High Anglicans acted on this advice of the *Record*, but whether the Church of England would be 'infinitely stronger' after their departure is a very debatable question. It would certainly be vastly weaker in numbers and personnel, but although much smaller in size and talent, it would gain in consistency and coherency by becoming a compact, old-fashioned Protestant body in agreement with its own articles, instead of the piebald, chaotic, facing-both-ways institution it now is. The *Times* says of the book: 'It is sincere. It gives unmistakable evidence of the writer's intense desire to follow the path which he thought was marked out for him. It discloses a singularly earnest endeavour on the part of a man full of ardor to find a home in which his unquiet spirit might find peace.' The *Daily Chronicle* describes the book as 'telling with frankness, sincerity, and literary felicity the story of Monsignor Benson's progress from the Church of England to Rome. Looking back on the events as recorded in this volume, it is obvious that Monsignor Benson was destined for Rome. His temperament is exactly suited to the environment he now enjoys. His soul has found an abiding satisfaction in the Catholic fold.'

THEN AND NOW

A PLAIN, COMMON-SENSE VIEW

The following article, 'Plain Common Sense,' is one of a series written by 'An Ulster Imperialist' in the *Irish Times*. After stating the failure of the Unionists to excite the passions of the British people, and the growth of a considerable body of the Orangemen who recognise that, sooner or later, Home Rule is bound to come, he passes on to a discussion of the situation as it actually is at present, and as it seems likely soon to be, saying in part:

In the old days Unionist bulwarks against Home Rule were many and powerful. A violent anti-Irish sentiment in England, a vivid recollection of times during the land war, a secession of Liberals as soon as a Liberal Government touched the question, the impregnable citadel of the House of Lords—such were some of the Unionists' defences. One by one these have disappeared, until now, in 1913, the only hope of defeating the present Bill is that, by some fluke, the Government may have to go to the country on some other issue before it is enforced.

Irish Unionism Hangs by a Single Hair.

Irish Unionism hangs by a single hair, where it used to be supported by a dozen hawsers of steel. That single hair is the English Conservative Party. It has become a very risky support to rely on. Three times within seven years English Conservatives have publicly shown themselves to be within measurable distance of throwing their Irish followers over. I refer, of course (1), to the incidents that occurred in 1905, when Sir Anthony MacDonnell was appointed by Balfour with the evident intention of devising some sweeping changes in the system of Irish government; (2) to the reception accorded by the English Unionist papers to the 'Pacificus' letters just before the last General Election in 1910; and (3) to the recent manœuvring about the 'referendum' and the 'Food taxes.'

The House of Lords' veto is gone, there has been no Liberal split, and the anti-Irish agitation has totally failed to effect its purpose among the English

voters. The Government at this time is stronger than it has been for a long time past, and the Unionist Party seems to be in an almost more hopeless condition than they were in 1906.

The Result of a Fluke.

And, suppose Mr. Asquith passes the Bill, and then goes to the country during the interval between that event and the first Irish elections? Does any one really hope now that England is capable of being influenced by the anti-Home Rule arguments? Why, even in 1895, it was a fluke of the rarest kind that saved the Unionist Party, for the majority of the electors (1,823,809) were in favor of Gladstone's policy, although the minority (1,785,372) secured 282 seats out of 484 contested! It is not likely that this fluke will occur again in a similar connection. Most Irish Unionists seem to be, like Mr. Micawber, waiting for something to turn up. Even if something should eventually turn up to defeat the Bill, it is high time that moderate people in this country should be thinking over their line of action in case their hopes should be in vain. There are not many alternatives. One is the 'Provisional Government' plan for Ulster. Those who believe in the possibility of setting up this opera bouffe arrangement will naturally not trouble about any other alternative.

The Plain Duty of All Irishmen.

It is, in any case, not much consolation to Unionists in the rest of Ireland to imagine an Irish Parliament without Ulstermen in it. The second is to lie low, and allow the present Bill, unamended, to be passed without any attempt to improve it. The third is, as soon as it becomes evident that the choice lies between the Bill as it stands and the Bill amended, for an organised expression of moderate opinion to be made by as large a body of Irish Unionists as possible. As everybody knows, there are plenty of Irishmen, even among those who signed the 'Covenant,' who are Unionist in their opinions, but who, if Home Rule comes, are willing to do their best to make the new arrangements work. It is the plain duty of all such men, once they realise that the Bill is going to pass, to help in making it a better Bill than it is.

But under the Parliament Act a Bill once stereotyped in the Commons cannot be altered, except by consent of all parties, if it is to be sent up over the heads of the Lords after its third passage through the Commons. It is not reasonable to expect the men I have referred to to amend the Bill constructively now.

Six months ago the Liberal Party might have been defeated in a general election by reason of the Insurance Act. Now that benefits have begun to accrue, this no longer applies; and I find very few people who really believe that an election in the near future would dismiss the Government.

You will have noticed that I have made no mention of Irish Unionist objections to Home Rule. I have deliberately left them out, because I do not believe that anything that we can now say on this side of the Channel is going to have any effect upon the fortunes of the Bill. Its passage will be secured or will fail according to the developments in England upon subjects wholly irrelevant to Home Rule or to Irish opinions, Unionist or Nationalist. To this general statement there are two partial exceptions. I dealt with one of them just now, when I showed how Irish Unionists who were willing, even at the last moment, to make the best of a bad job, could influence the Bill for good. The other exception is an argument which I observe you use pretty frequently to abolish persons who wish the Bill to be amended with Unionist assistance.

Ulster's Fears are Imaginary.

You seem to believe that the central fact in the whole situation is the civil war which is going to break out in Ulster, and which is going to make Home Rule impossible. Well, I live in Ulster, and I don't believe in the civil war. Is Ulster, then, not in earnest, in her opposition to Home Rule? Of course she is in earnest in opposing what she fears will be a reign of

George Barrell

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