

that the legend is not destroyed. Ulster serves a purpose—the self-same purpose that she served in the early plantation days. Therefore, she is useful as an instrument, but only when she is a legend. But British commerce is not a legend. It is the propelling force in British politics, and for sound commercial reasons—to British traders the best of all reasons—British statesmen fiddle and equivocate about the interpretation of the Boundary clause of the Treaty.

Daylight.

The *Catholic Bulletin* is usually well informed as to the reason of things political. It believes that as far as Ireland is concerned British statesmen are on the horns of a dilemma. There is much wild talk in the North about civil war; and in the South there is a strong Republican section eager to scrap the Treaty and declare a republic. Then, there is the Free State Government standing firm upon the Treaty and insisting that all its clauses be honoured. A definite breach of the Treaty by Britain would mean the fall of the Free State Government, with a Republican Government as a probable sequence. Under these latter circumstances Britain may find it difficult to prevent war; and just as present there are two things she cannot afford—she cannot afford the destruction of the Ulster legend, and she cannot afford war in Ireland. Ireland is still Britain's most valuable market, and it is the one market where she is not menaced either by competition or hostile tariffs. The decline of British trade in the world's markets moves the politicians to temporise with Ireland. According to the *Times* the Board of Trade returns show that in the first quarter of last year that while exports from the United States and France exceeded imports by £30,000,000 and £8,000,000 respectively, the imports of Great Britain exceeded exports by £69,000,000. Again, at the annual meeting of the Calico Printers' Association, held in September, the Chairman revealed the fact that India now took only one-half the amount of printed cotton goods from the United Kingdom that she did before the war. A similar reduction was shown in the purchases by Persia and Baghdad. In the case of Rangoon, the Levant, and South America the decline was heavier still. The success of foreign competitors was due to lower taxation, lower freight charges, lower scale of wages, and longer working hours. Italy, the Chairman added, had practically secured a monopoly of the flannelette trade in the Near East markets, and Americans, who had undersold the British in shirtings, had themselves been undersold by the Japanese. If anything, conditions in the iron, steel, and ship-building trades are worse, while the competition of German coal is bound to become more severe as Germany regains her economic liberty.

Strategy.

The *Catholic Bulletin* goes on to say that all parties in England are agreed on the necessity of maintaining Partition, but they particularly wish to have Partition acquiesced in by the Irish themselves. The position is one of extreme delicacy. There is danger of war from three quarters—two

of which are in Ireland, and one is in England itself. Some time ago Mr Thomas disclosed the drift of British policy when he said that a Republic in Ireland would not be tolerated. There is much more in this at the present time than in the ordinary stereotyped objection to which we have long been accustomed. It means that if a war has to be faced this is the point upon which it will be forced. A war arising on the issue of a violation of the Agreement would be a more serious matter for England than a war following on the declaration of an Irish Republic. A war fought by the Free State for the possession of Tyrone and Fermanagh could justly be described as a defensive war, and a cause likely to engage influential sympathy. The Free State could quote the "scrap of paper" and the violation of Belgium. Obviously, if a Commission sat, its findings, whatever they might be, would be a cause of war. All things considered, the last thing England wants is a war in Ireland within the Articles of Agreement. But should there be a war, the object of the British policy of delay will reveal itself as having been followed for the purpose of making the issue the proclamation of an Irish Republic.

Decay of Manners.

The *Times* lately delivered to modern society a strong dose of salutary home truth concerning the decay of manners. "Go to any place where people are dancing, listen to the music, and watch the actions of the couples. Then let imagination carry you back two hundred years to the day of the Minuet. There is no doubt about the ideal aimed at then. It was elegance and distinction both in music and dancing. Heaven alone knows what is aimed at now beyond perspiration and noise." The critic then goes on to attribute the present state of manners to "the sudden arrival of democracy in power," but that contention is exploded by the *Bombay Examiner*. The latter paper points out how absurd it is to pretend that the middle and lower classes of England direct modern taste. The whole evil is that they too slavishly imitate the bad example set by the wealthy. The second reason given for the decay of manners the *Examiner* believes to be the chief one. The *Times* writer puts it well: "The sudden advance of scientific knowledge has blinded us to the real degeneracy in the things that matter. We have imagined that the fact that we could talk to one another over a few million miles of wires was a more important thing than the fact that we had really nothing interesting to say. We have imagined that the fact that we can get into boxes which will carry us very much faster over the world's surface than our ancestors could go, marked us out as their superiors, and we have been oblivious to the fact that the really important things are the minds of the people who move about. There is no point in an empty head travelling even a thousand miles an hour." In a word, comments our contemporary, it is the modern concentration on merely material progress to the neglect of the things of the spirit that manifests itself in the modern decay of manners. This

is very true, and it is an evil which successive Popes have emphasised again and again throughout the last century. "It is perfectly evident," wrote Leo XIII, "that the very notion of civilisation is a fiction of the brain if it rest not on the abiding principle of truth and the unchanging laws of virtue and justice. . . . Civilisation divorced from religion is but a worthless imitation and a meaningless name."

How? What? Why?

A Methodist minister of Wilkesbarre, Pa., U.S.A., in the person of Rev. James Benninger, pays an eloquent tribute to the Catholic Church. We reproduce it without comment:—

We have fumed and fussed and worked ourselves into a frenzy while the Catholic Church, without any effort on her part, has gone on the even tenor of her way solving the problems to the satisfaction of her Hierarchy. How does she do it? How does she get men out of bed on Sunday morning at an early hour—men who work late on Saturday night? How does she fill the streets on Sunday morning with worshippers, when the Protestant world is fast asleep? I know some of the explanations that are offered, but they do not explain. Many that we have heard and read only seem childish twaddle. One man will tell you that the Catholic Church contains nobody but ignorant people. But is that true to the facts of the case? Do we not know of brilliant lawyers and judges and professors and business men who are devout worshippers at her shrine? But if it were true that she had only ignorant people, would not the criticism pay her a high compliment? For every Protestant clergyman in Christendom knows that the hardest people to get along with are ignorant people. A Church that can gather and hold the ignorant people has a vitality very much to be desired. But the criticism is not true. Another man will tell you that the Catholic Church scares people into her fold. But that explanation is no better than the first. You can readily see how one generation might be frightened into doing something, but who is willing to believe that twenty generations can be worked upon in the same way? The scarecrow method is bound to play out with the growing years. Her secret lies deeper. The reason the Catholic Church succeeds, in spite of our misgivings, is because she is true to the central fact of revelation. She makes the death of Jesus the centre of her devotion, and around that point she organises all her activities. When you see a company of Catholic people on the way to church you can be assured of this: they are not going for the sake of fine music, they are not going to hear an eloquent dissertation on Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. They are going to that place of worship to attend Mass. What is the celebration of the Mass? It is what we call the celebration of the Lord's Supper. That fact is kept prominently before the mind of every Catholic. What is the first thing you see as you approach a Catholic Church? A cross. What is the first thing you see as you enter that church? A cross. What is the first thing you see a Catholic do as he seats himself in that church? Makes the Sign of the Cross. What is the last thing held before the eyes of a dying Catholic? A cross. He comes into the Church in childhood imbued with the death of Jesus; he goes out of this world thinking of the death of Jesus.

Good books are not only our friends; they are our best teachers. Bad books are a curse and do a world of harm. Nothing spreads falsehood and evil more surely than a bad book.

A. H. Fitzgerald

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