

do a signal service to National Unity, and one that would be remembered to the credit of his Party, by allowing Mr. Griffith to be returned unopposed. The reply was that he had come there on an invitation to discuss the Conscription issue, and that alone, and would withdraw from the Conference if any other topic was introduced. He went off to Cavan to war upon his imprisoned colleague, flushed with the results of the two most recent elections (in South Armagh, the cradle of "the Mollies" and in Waterford where Mr. Redmond's son had been returned in his place through a humane feeling more delicate than he had experienced from his own friends in his last visit to the hall of the "Irish Convention") and full of the fatuous confidence that the triumph was going to be repeated on a more grandiose scale in East Cavan.

Here are the terms in which he saw fit to speak during the electioneering campaign of his deported colleague on the Mansion House Conference:

"The Sinn Fein party have elected to put forward as a candidate for East Cavan the most offensive and scurrilous critic of the Irish Party in their ranks. For a long period Mr. Griffith has poured forth a torrent of the most disgusting and infamous abuse and calumny on the Irish Party as a whole and upon individual members of that party and therefore it would have been impossible to pick out a candidate more calculated to add bitterness to that fight. In addition to that they have started their campaign by raising the most contentious issues that divide the Party from Sinn Fein and by pouring out a flood of misstatements and calumny upon the Party and its policy."

The curious student of Mr. Dillon's speeches will find that this "flood and torrent of disgusting and infamous abuse" constitutes almost word for word his stereotyped defence to specific allegations as to his Party's public actions which he never attempted to answer by going into equally concrete particulars.

The charge of "scurrility" was a specially ludicrous one against Mr. Griffith who, of all the publicists of his time, was distinguished for the measure and dignity of his words. The real point of the Hibernian leader's vituperation was that Mr. Griffith had given to the public in his journal the series of secret telegrams in which the three members for Limerick were caught soliciting a Castle Office for one of their confederates by the most abject methods of the parliamentary place-beggar. Mr. Griffith had committed the still more unforgivable sin of giving publication to a highly confidential letter of Lady Aberdeen to "Dear Mr. Brayden" (the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, thirteen of whose staff had already been rewarded with handsome Government jobs) in which the Lord Lieutenant's wife revealed a spirit of political partisanship so undisguised that its publication necessitated her husband's resignation of the Viceroyalty. Stern methods of political warfare, both of them, no doubt, but both of them referring to concerns of deep public interest, and both of them incontestably true; and surely no more deserving the epithets

of "scurrility," or of "torrents of the most infamous calumny," than Edmund Burke would have deserved them for his impeachment of Warren Hastings. Above all, the recklessness of such an attitude at such a moment towards a colleague locked up in an English gaol on the strength of a truly "infamous calumny" which might have cost him his life!

Where he might have reaped the gratitude of a nation, the new Hibernian leader only earned a just humiliation. Mr. Griffith was elected by an overwhelming majority for East Cavan, or Conscription would have been to a certainty pressed at any cost of bloodshed.

One last effort was made to bend Mr. Dillon. The yearning cry still came from the country: "Why dissolve a National Cabinet, which has begun so well, and whose united lead every parish in the island will follow? Why should not the Mansion House Conference confront English Ministers with a combination of the young men and the old, of the new weapons and the old, in a movement in which all honest men of the race could gladly venture their fortunes and their lives?" It had become an accepted electioneering cry on both sides that there could be only two alternative policies for the country to choose between: what was called "the Constitutional movement" and what was called "the unconstitutional movement." Nothing could be more untrue to the realities of the case. All that had been won for Ireland in our time was won neither by constitutional means nor by unconstitutional means, pure and simple, but by a judicious combination of the two, according to the country's changing circumstances. That, indeed, had been the history of Irish patriotism for ages. The writer laid before the Mansion House Conference a detailed proposal to take advantage of their unexampled opportunity at that moment to find some wider basis of agreement on which all Parties might co-operate in their several ways. "If our Sinn Fein colleagues," it was urged, "can only see their way to even an experimental toleration of true Dominion Independence (which differs little, except in name from Sovereign Independence) no substantial divergence would remain between Nationalists of any school, and it could be affirmed, not altogether without knowledge, that, in England's present critical situation, Dominion Independence would become practical politics. Should, however, Dominion Independence by agreement be found impossible during the war, all Nationalists would in that event be in agreement to press for the only remaining alternative—viz., representation for Ireland at the Peace Congress—and would, I take it, be agreed also in breaking off all connection with the Westminster Parliament in the meantime."

Was it still practicable to weld "constitutionalists" and "unconstitutionalists" together in a movement as circumspect as Parnell's and as daring as Easter Week? It was not possible to answer dogmatically in the affirmative. But the omens were almost all auspicious. The representatives of Sinn Fein, although cordially sympathetic, had no authority to bind their body without anxious

and complicated consultations. But there were as yet none of the obstacles that proved afterwards all but insurmountable. There were no commitments to an Irish Republic, beyond Mr. de Valera's speeches in Clare; there was no oath to trouble the consciences of the young men. Most of the Sinn Fein leaders were in prison and their newspapers suppressed, and those who remained were face to face with the ruthless military repression just announced by Lord French. Even in the electoral sense, Sinn Fein still only counted as 5 in a Nationalist representation of 81. The representatives of Labor would assuredly have closed with the proposition. The Bishops, fresh from the triumph of their perilous stand against Conscription, were not likely to miss the opportunity of doing another magnificent service to the nation. Mr. Devlin, though he hesitated to separate himself from Mr. Dillon so soon after he had separated himself from Mr. Redmond, was evincing unmistakable signs of tractability. Only one voice was raised to forbid even a discussion of the project. Mr. Dillon could not find it in the bond. He once more protested that he was brought there on the invitation of the Lord Mayor to discuss one solitary issue—Conscription—and would not stand the introduction of any other proposition; and as it had been the somewhat improvident rule of the Conference to press no decision that was not to be an unanimous one, there was an end.

An end, also, of the last hope of rehabilitating any "constitutional" movement capable of purification or of purchasing Ireland's freedom otherwise than by the shedding of streams of Ireland's best blood. The "National Cabinet," like so many other projects of high promise for the nation, fell to pieces at the touch of one unlucky hand.

(To be continued.)

WEDDING BELLS

LOFT—McVICAR.

St. Mary's Church, Wanganui, was the scene of a very pretty wedding on September 16 last, when James Loft, eldest son of Mrs. C. Ritchie and the late John Loft, of Auckland, was united in the bonds of holy Matrimony to Mary Esther McVicar, eldest daughter of Mr. H. B. McVicar and the late Mrs. McVicar, of Manaiā, Taranaki. The Rev. Father Mahony officiated. The bride, who entered the church on the arm of her father, wore a dainty gown of cream morocco satin. Her veil was held in place with a circlet of orange blossoms, and she carried a beautiful bouquet of pale pink sweet peas and freesias. The bridesmaid, Miss R. McVicar (sister of the bride), wore a delicate blue frock of satin soleil, and a black georgette hat trimmed with ospreys. She carried a dainty bouquet of cream freesias. Mr. Johi Loft, brother of the bridegroom, was best man. After the ceremony a reception was held at St. Joseph's Hall, where the customary toasts were honored. Mr. and Mrs. Loft left later for their wedding trip, the bride wearing a nigger brown costume, with hat to tone; also a black fur coat, which was one of the handsome wedding gifts.

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