

the Cannibal Islands. It did not make it easier to convert the King of the Cannibal Islands. On the other hand, as Europeans, and not merely as Englishmen, we naturally had a certain technical superiority to the cannibals, and a certain healthy distaste for cannibalism. To that extent we ruled; but it was always, for good or evil, a very negative sort of rule compared with the positive rule that has positively civilised barbarians. Clive did not make a new India as Caesar made a new Gaul. Warren Hastings did not refound an Indian state as William the Conqueror refounded a British state; he simply played one Indian state against another, in the interests of the English mercantile adventure. We may call this character the liberty of our rule, or the limitation of our philosophy, or any other name bad or good; the practical essential is to seize the fact, for it explains both our success and our failure.

In short, the two practical disadvantages of the imperial idea are, first that it is not imperial, and, second, that it is not an idea. The ordinary imperialist, such as he who wrote the letter about the Ulster Boys, has no idea of what the idea is. Such people merely want to have their own way, shoot at the people they don't like and shoot with the people they do, play at the games that amuse them and forget the problems they cannot solve, and then cover this very common and very human taste with a mass of meaningless abstractions about Law and Union and Justice and Fair Play. But that is not an idea at all; as Catholicism or Calvinism or Socialism or even Prussianism are ideas. But precisely because it is so verbose and so empty, it attracts the sort of half-educated type that is common in colonies—such as the Orange Colony in Ireland. Such crude and cockney minds are quite content to make self-indulgence idealistic by the addition of self-praise. It is therefore a permanent possibility and a permanent peril, that they may re-inforce what they call the imperial idea, where the real and relatively civilised English would remain indifferent to it, through the possession of a sense of humor.

Now it is certain that this colonial, external and even alien element, much more than the English element, is at this moment feeding the general hatred of England. Anybody who has been at any of our seats of military occupation has heard with his own ears complaints of some of the colonial soldiers of their insolence, their brutality and their anarchy. He has heard these complaints, not from Irish peasants, not from Egyptian fellaheen, not from negroes or Chinamen, but from the English officers of English regiments; from ordinary professional soldiers who are undoubtedly good patriots and who believe themselves to be good imperialists. A British officer may be an Imperialist; but he cannot enlarge his mind to take in the fulness of the Imperial idea. The Imperial idea means looting shops and shooting non-combatants, and going on in the simplest fashion of savages sacking a white settlement; nor do we doubt for a moment that the Orange colonists are capable of understanding and extending that idea. But it is not only a question of Orangemen, but of almost any other kind of men whom the ignorance of our victims may mistake for Englishmen; Jews and Americans and Scotchmen, not to mention Welshmen. We read lately, in one of the Coalitionist papers, a list of those who were there described as the four or five Ministers most determined on resolute repression in Ireland. It did not contain a single English name.

Clearly it is time that the English had something to say in all this. The English have vices of their own, the worst being the snobbish indifference to self-government which permits them to be thus misrepresented. But their own original vices involved nothing resembling the fanatical ferocity of the Orangemen or the oriental megalomania of the Jews. As this sort of Empire has suffered this sort of expansion, the original Englishman in the centre of it has dwindled steadily in comparison and counted for less and less. Nothing has marked more unmistakably the Imperialistic period than the complete oblivion of the very existence of an English character. Much is said of the Scottish character when it is desirable to flatter it, and much of the Irish character when it is desirable to oppress it. But even to speak of the English character, as distinct from the Scottish or Irish, has the

shock of something that is new because it is neglected, and neglected because it is near.

This point is strictly a part of national defence; and it is only in self-defence that it should so be stated. Nobody dreams of denying that these external elements have their merits also; that crowds of colonial soldiers died for a glorious historical memory, that numbers of colonies are democratic in a sense much more sincere than our own. We should never deny that Sir Henry Wilson was a loyal and valuable public servant, whether he was involved in the opinions quoted or no. We should no more think of generalising against all Ulster colonists, or other colonists, than of generalising against all Scotchmen. It is rather reluctantly that we realise the harm done to our cause by our auxiliaries; but it is true, as things go at present, that we English shall hardly partake either of the crimes or the prizes of the partisans of the imperial idea. We shall partake only of their punishment.

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

ANTI-GERMAN PROPAGANDA IN THE SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR

Sir,—Taking up a recent number of the *School Journal* from one of my children I was forcibly reminded of a late definition of the word "propaganda" as "his." The number in question contained the following silly untruths: "At one time the most of it [America] belonged to Great Britain but some of the Kings of England who were German treated the people so badly that they rose up against the British and set up a nation of their own." I pass over the amazing statement that most of America belonged to Great Britain. (By the way the term Great Britain does not include Ireland whatever writers in the *Journal* may think. They possibly do not know the official title of the United Kingdom—"The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.") I come to the nationality of the Kings. If George III. was a German is not George IV. one also? Both had German grandfathers. Our present King makes no protestation of nationality, but George III. "gloried in the name of Briton." The *School Journal* is really too hard on poor George III. That King was always pig-headed and often mad, but to state that he was responsible for the American War and to insinuate that the English people were guiltless, is not playing the game. The King was not an absolute monarch; he governed by a parliament elected by the English people. If the people did not favor the war it could not be carried on. It is true that Chatham opposed the war, but the main opposition in parliament came from Burke, Barré, Connolly, and Sheridan—all Irishmen. Lord Chatham said: "Ireland to a man is in favor of the Americans." The Irish then were not responsible.

The endeavor to place the responsibility for the Revolutionary War on poor mad George III. dates from recent times, when England felt the need of an understanding (or something stronger) with America. It is the people must shoulder the responsibility under a constitutional government. But were the English people opposed to the war as poet-propagandists, historian-propagandists, and newspaper-propagandists would now lead us to believe? The English people were the real guilty party. Spencer (*History of United States*) says: "In England there was a general sentiment in favor of compelling the colonies to submission," and Taylor, another historian, says: "There was not an English peasant who did not regard the colonists as rebels against himself." The *Pennsylvania Gazette* of March 4, 1774, published a letter from London containing the following: "There is no more obnoxious character here at present than that of a friend of America." When Franklin appeared before the English Privy Council in 1774 he was treated as if he had been a common criminal. The Solicitor-General's speech was filled with scurrility and personal abuse and was thoroughly enjoyed by the 35 gentlemen (?) who came to enjoy the proceedings, just as if it were a bull-baiting and forgetful or careless of the fact that he represented a rising people as ambassador, whose person should be sacred. Stories about the "old mad King" and the "Hessians" won't do amongst educated people.—I am, etc.,

C. O'LAOGHAIRE.

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