

farms; the silk crop, in millions of small, poor homes; the tea crop, on countless little patches of soil. If you visit Kyoto to order something from one of the greatest porcelain makers in the world, one whose products are known better in London and in Paris than even in Japan, you will find the factory to be a wooden cottage in which no American farmer would live. The greatest maker of *cloisonne* vases, who may ask you two hundred dollars for something five inches high, produces his miracles behind a two-story frame dwelling consisting of perhaps six rooms. The best girdles of silk made in Japan, and famous throughout the Empire, are woven in a house that cost scarcely five hundred dollars. The work is of course hand-woven." Protestantism killed such wonderful arts in England and would kill them everywhere if it could. But they still survive and the killer is growing very feeble. We know what the Japanese visitors at Versailles thought of Massey, Hughes and Co. But if they had seen our Bill make his gesture!

The Strategical Question

WOULD AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND BE A DANGER TO ENGLAND?

Why does England refuse freedom to Ireland?

A host of evasive and contradictory answers have been given to this question in the past (says the *Irish Bulletin*). But the last two years have cleared the ground of unreal controversies and fictitious issues. There survives but one answer to the eternal question posed, and that answer is that it would be "unsafe" for England to do otherwise.

All the recent utterances of responsible British statesmen, including the Prime Minister, have narrowed the question to this single point. "An independent Ireland on our flank," they have repeated again and again, "would be a military and strategical danger to us."

It is a brutally frank proposition, proclaimed without hypocrisy and seemingly without a suspicion that it amounts to a denial of all international right, and violates the principle in the name of which Europe was drenched with blood for four years.

But whether it be morally right or wrong, is the proposition true? Would an independent Ireland, in fact, be a danger to England?

The difficulty is to place this important theme upon the plane of reasonable discussion. The supposed danger, for those who believe in it, is usually not a matter of argument but of unreasoning fear, while the trained strategists, accustomed to regard the world as a battle-field and humanity as cannon-fodder, take it for granted that every country, even an island, must be a military danger to its neighbors.

Yet it is a shocking and unconscionable thing that men should fight with passion for an empty delusion, above all in a war which, at the time hostilities were suspended, was threatening to become a veritable war of extermination upon the Irish people, and which, if peace is not to result, may resume that terrible complexion.

We appeal, while there is still time, for a cool and thoughtful consideration of the subject.

The Choice Before England

In the first place let us have it clear that for England the question is not one simply of safety, but of contrasting the relative safety of two opposite courses. Is she safer with an Ireland under her military control, as at present, than she would be with an independent Ireland? A violently hostile Ireland is undoubtedly a danger to her, and, in the larger sense of the word "strategy" a strategical danger. It chains to the costly and odious task of coercion a large army which might at any moment be needed for vital work elsewhere. It requires a money outlay far exceeding any profit derived from the possession of this island. It involves England in a war of a kind which is damaging to her prestige and admits of no finality because the objective is an unconquerable abstraction, the soul and spirit of a people. Lastly it makes England bitter enemies among the Irish race throughout the world, with results, especially in America, which are an embarrassment to her imperial policies.

These facts are unquestioned. Those who say that our independence would be a danger to England are bound to prove that the danger would be greater than it is now.

Mr. Lloyd George, in a speech at Carnarvon on October 9 of last year, came nearer to a reasoned strategical argument than any statesman in recent days, and the reasons he gave for the military subjection of Ireland will serve as a basis for discussion.

He made two points, not merely against an Irish Republic but against "Dominion Home Rule." The first was that England would be forced to have conscription because "you could not have an army of 500,000 or 600,000 men in Ireland and only an army of about 100,000 men here."

The second point was that "they (the Irish) need not build a navy. You do not need to spend much on submarines. They are vicious little craft but they are not expensive."

Here are two assertions with which we can grapple. The danger to England is alleged to come from an Irish army and from Irish submarines.

Mr. Lloyd George spoke as if Ireland, single-handed, could make these menaces effective, and the simplest plan is to begin by following him in this assumption, because the underlying strategic principles will thus emerge most clearly. Afterwards we can suppose that Ireland had an ally or allies or that her neutrality, like that of Belgium, was violated.

The Supposed Danger from an Irish Army

Let us take the army first, and passing by the rhetorical use of some rather startling figures, get to the point. The only rational meaning to be attached to Mr. Lloyd George's proposition is that the Irish Army would in some way threaten England. Now let us suppose that little Ireland, with her 4½ millions of people and her revenue, screwed to the highest point by exorbitant taxation, of only 50 millions, were really to form the insane ambition of menacing with military force her mighty neighbor, Britain, with 42 millions of people and a revenue of 1,000 millions. How is the threat to be carried out?

The Irish army could certainly be used up to the limit of its strength for defending Irish soil. But defence is not a menace. For offence it must be transported overseas on ships which would have to be protected by a navy capable of defeating the British Navy, and securing the permanent and undisputed command of the sea, for it is an accepted axiom of strategy that an over-sea invasion is not possible without the secure maintenance of sea-communications. Germany, with the largest army in the world and the second navy in the world, was not able to land a man in England in the recent war. England, thanks to her command of the sea, was able to land millions of troops continuously upon the continent, place them upon the battle-front, and eventually throw them into Germany.

Ireland, then, starting without a single naval ship to her credit, must in order to menace England with her army, first become a naval power greater than England. Now it certainly is not reasonable to refuse Ireland independence on the ground that this prodigious inversion of relative positions might be a miracle come to pass in the far future. It is hardly necessary to add that all the small nations of Europe could legitimately be extinguished to-morrow by their great military neighbors if the principle applied to Ireland were to be sanctioned by the opinion of the world.

Governing Strategical Facts

Some governing strategical facts are now becoming clear:

1. Ireland and Britain are islands.
2. Their offensive and defensive power in war depend therefore, primarily, on naval strength.

3. Ireland is immeasurably weaker than Britain, not only in naval but in military resources, and cannot even begin to approach equality within any foreseeable period.

An appreciation of these governing facts, ignored by Mr. Lloyd George, should dissipate the submarine peril also—a peril with a peculiar appeal to nervous and unreflecting minds. It is so easy to conjure up pictures of these mysterious little craft, "vicious" and "not expensive," issuing from a small nation's ports to paralyse the fleets and commerce of a mighty enemy. But is this really possible? Observe Mr. Lloyd George's words: "They (the Irish) need not build a navy." But we have seen that in reality they must build the greatest navy in the world in order to threaten England with their army. The same manifestly applies to their use of submarines.

Submarines, to be of the smallest use in modern war, are, of course, not cheap. They must be large, numerous and costly out of all proportion to the slender revenues of Ireland. Germany built 400, lost 200, and failed in her objective. But their cost is a minor matter. The bases from which they operate must be secure, and with a hostile power like England in command of the neighboring seas, the Irish submarine bases would have to be impregnable secure against attack by sea, air, or land. They must be secure from sea and air attack because naval bombardment with aerial observation, or aerial bombardment from aircraft carried on warships can destroy unprotected dock-yards and submarines on the surface—and they must be on the surface in and approaching port—can prevent the