

Self-determination for Ireland

That there are many difficulties in the way of making this doctrine of self-determination the basis of political institutions everywhere, no one will deny. Some of the difficulties brought against it, as for instance, the question of deciding the rights of minorities, and that of defining the political unit which is to enjoy such right, may with equal justice be brought against any known or conceivable form of political organization. These are the difficulties which have arisen in the case of Ireland.

One argument of great importance in favor of self-determination is that the doctrine is merely an extension of the principles of democracy, and is a protest against slavery in any of its forms. The world will never be "safe for democracy" while some nations hold others in subjection.

English statesmen have made a miserable showing in their handling of the Irish question. They have deliberately side-stepped the plain issues in the case, notably at the Peace Conference, where they refused the Irish a hearing: thus making a mockery of President Wilson's utterance, when at the first plenary session of the Peace Conference at Paris, on January 25th, 1919, he said: We are here to see that every people in the world shall choose its own masters and govern its own destinies, not as we wish, but as they wish."

The Irish Delegation were refused a hearing at the Peace Conference because speeches delivered in Ireland by three American Catholic gentlemen were considered unfriendly. These men, men of honor and integrity, men who have served their own country

faithfully and well, went to Ireland at the invitation of Premier Lloyd George to investigate the conditions. Although they were given passports, which entitled them to visit any place they desired, the military authorities refused them admittance to "certain" places; yet the sworn report, which they published on their return to Paris, astounded the civilized world. The conditions which they found especially in large cities and in prisons were revolting, yet England the "protector of small nations" knew such conditions existed. English rule in Ireland might overcome the handicap of being English and alien, but it could not overcome the handicap of being English and bad. Little wonder then that Ireland should raise her voice for self-determination.

Let us for a moment cast our eyes across the sea to the Emerald Isle—the land of saints and scholars—and see the chaotic conditions existing there through British misrule. Politically, Irishmen are divided into Separatists, Home Rulers, and Unionists. The Separatists believe in an independent Ireland; the Home Rulers in a form of government similar to that of Canada or Australia; and the Unionists believe that the Union with England should be maintained. There is no political party in Ireland friendly to England, as was proven by the Unionists in taking up arms against the Home Rule Bill. English domination is not alien to the Unionists, but it is the Catholic Church which makes them separate from the majority of Irishmen. Ulster, the Unionist stronghold, has been aided, abetted, and subsidized to fight against Home Rule.

The Sinn Fein party is a strong factor in Ireland, and will have much to do in shaping the destiny of that fair Isle. The Sinn Fein movement, which at first

was very weak, is now the dominating influence of Ireland. The people losing sympathy with their Nationalist party representatives turned to the Fenian movement as a haven of refuge. The English government by brutality, murders and unfair discrimination have goaded the people on, and as a natural sequence, the Irish, or at least, the majority of them, want a government that is distinctly separate from Westminster.

The English government has now submitted a plan by which it is hoped Home Rule will come into effect. The Britain "that helped to destroy the greatest military power in the world," is conceding nothing through fear, as Lloyd George says. If current press reports are correct, the scheme or plan falls far short of the Nationalistic demands of Ireland. It decrees that customs and excise are to be controlled by the imperial parliament, as well as the income and excess taxes. It also decrees that the high judiciary is to be appointed by Britain, and also the post office. What is left for Ireland to legislate? We should remember the fact that Ireland cannot lay any duty on English goods. We, in Canada, have that right. It thus follows that Ireland cannot build stable industries as the English goods and products undersell them.

Ireland is a subject nation; yet Irishmen of every generation have claimed the right to their freedom and independence. Ireland's case, since she is a subject nation, is similar to a boy at school. In education; the two elements which most speedily and surely develop the sense of individuality in a boy are responsibility and punishment. A subject nation receives both of these. A militant nationalism is born as soon as a subject nation begins to be held responsible for the observance of statutes that check its

racial tendencies and natural impulses, and in a short time an armed uprising is the result.

We must realize this fact that the average citizen in Ireland takes a deep interest in politics. In most countries politics do not interest the average citizen to a very great degree for the very simple reason that the condition of the State is one of tranquility. It is chronic to have something the matter with the State of Ireland; this is the cause of the great interest which the Irish take in politics. A great deal of national effort has been expended in the fight for self-determination without any apparent result, but it is our ardent hope that the sacrifices made for it have not been in vain.

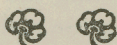
The men, who today are seeking self-determination for Ireland, are termed Sinn Feiners. The casual reader, who knows nothing of the meaning of Sinn Fein, has been led by many English writers and their imitators to think that a Sinn Feiner is a monster, that only the depraved and those lost beyond hope of redemption would have anything to do with such a movement. Sinn Fein means "ourselves," conveying the idea that Ireland can only hope for regeneration by being self-reliant. The Sinn Fein movement is not new in Ireland, nor will it rest until England grants Ireland her just right—self-determination.

Self-determination is still a live issue. It was not a product of mob psychology but of philosophic reflection. It accords with what is best in human nature; it satisfies what men have always most earnestly desired; it opens up the way to progress when the only alternative seems to be Bolshevism.

Let us hope that England will soon grant self-determination to the Irish people so that they may

govern themselves as they wish, This will guarantee the social as well as the political independence of every man, woman and child—the common ownership of all Ireland by all the Irish, then will Ireland take her just place amongst the nations of the world in peace, liberty, and glory.

T. J. Stapleton, '22.



The scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar.

The soul of man is larger than the sky,
Deeper than ocean, or the abysmal dark
Of the unfathomed centre.

—Coleridge.

Poets are all who love—who feel great truths,
And tell them.

—Bailey.

The press is the fourth estate of the realm.

Did charity prevail, the press would prove
A vehicle of virtue, truth and love.

—Cowper.

He's armed without that's innocent within.

—Pope.