

# IRISH FREEDOM

## EDITED BY ARTHUR GRIFFITH.

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### WEEK BY WEEK

Our space is not adequate to publish a full report of the Sinn Féin Convention, and accordingly it will be separately issued, as rapidly as possible. Under the revised constitution the Governing Body of Sinn Féin will consist of the seven officers and 24 Executive members elected by the Convention, with one representative chosen by the Sinn Féin Branches in each Parliamentary Constituency. The officers and Executive members elected at the Convention last week were as follows:—President, Eamonn De Valera; Vice-Presidents, Arthur Griffith (1,197 votes), and Father O'Flanagan, C.C. (780); Hon. Treasurers, W. Cosgrave, M.P. (737), and Laurence Ginnell, M.P. (491); Hon. Secretaries, Austin Stack (857), and Darrell Figgis (510); Executive members, Eoin MacNeill (888), Cathal Brugha (685), Dr. Hayes (674), Sean Milroy (667), Countess Markievicz (617), Count Plunkett, M.P. (598), Piaras Beaslai (557), Joseph McGuinness, M.P. (501), Finian Lynch (475), Harry Boland (448), Dr. Kathleen Lynn (425), J. J. Walsh (424), Joseph McDonagh (421), Father Matt Ryan, P.P. (416), Father Wall, C.C. (408), Mrs. Thomas Clarke (402), Diarmuid Lynch (390), David Kent (385), Sean T. O'Kelly, T.C. (367), Dr. T. Dillon (364), Mrs. Joseph Plunkett (345), Sean McEntee (342), Ernest Blyth (340), Michael Collins (340).

Messrs. De Valera, Griffith, MacNeill, and Milroy addressed a huge gathering in Ballinabore, which Mr. John Dillon recently claimed for the Party—on Sunday last. On Saturday night the speakers were escorted into the town by a torchlight procession, and on Sunday from all districts of East Cavan contingents poured into the town, including hundreds of cyclists and horsemen. The meeting, which was attended by over ten thousand people, was presided over by Mr. M. J. Leavy, who recently resigned his Commission of the Peace, and who will preside over the Cavan Arbitration Court. To it came messages of inspiration and encouragement from Missignor O'Connell, Fr. Gaffney, P.P., V.F., Virginia, Fr. Gilchrist, P.P., Kill, Fr. Barry, P.P., Oldcastle, Fr. Brogan, P.P., Moyalty, and Fr. McLoughlin, C.C., Belurath.

Howth, in North County Dublin, was the scene of a large meeting addressed by Messrs Cosgrave, M.P., Figgis, and Sears, and presided over by Mr. L. Nolan. Mr. J. Mac Guinness, speaking at a meeting in the Mountjoy Ward of Dublin, informed the representative in the British Parliament of that part of Dublin—Alderman Byrne—that as he had been a good active worker, according to his lights, he would be accepted by Sinn Féin if he renounced the British Parliament and submitted to the policy of Sinn Féin. At Kinnegad, in Westmeath, a most successful meeting was addressed by Messrs. Ginnell, M.P., and Fleming.

A Unionist correspondent who asks us to name "one tangible advantage" Ireland would enjoy by being separated from Great Britain is hereby informed of this one:—If the war stopped to-morrow the tax per head levied on the inhabitants of Ireland and Great Britain to provide for (a) Interest on the War Loans, (b) Sinking Fund, (c) Pensions, and (d) Expenses of Government on a pre-war basis would amount to £140 per annum, or £2 13s. 6d. per week. If Ireland were separated from Great Britain the taxation per head in Ireland for the purposes (a), (b), (c) and (d) would be £0 0s. 0d. per annum and £0 0s. 0d. per week. If this "one tangible advantage" does not satisfy our Unionist friend, he can have nine-and-ninety others.

A London daily newspaper, commenting on the Sinn Féin Convention, amites us in this fashion:—

Their statement is that they want an Irish Republic, "completely independent of Great Britain. That sounds very fine; but are the Irish people prepared to pay for their own Republic and to face the economic and military consequences of independence? Are Irishmen prepared to pay for their own old age pensions, for their own police, for their own education? Are they prepared to run the risk of a hostile British tariff against Irish goods? And, finally, are they prepared to provide an army and a navy for the defence of their own national independence?

To all of which questions the answer is in the affirmative. Irishmen are not only prepared to pay all these things, but they could pay them on a lesser sum than they have to pay now to the English Oligarchy, which, after extracting last year the cost of old age pensions, police and education, and all other costs from Ireland, colluded £12,000,000 of Irish money for its Treasury. At the present time Ireland pays £1,800,000 for the English Government police in this country, £11,000 strong, and £1,400,000 for the primary education of 800,000 children—the upkeep of one R.I.C. man costing as much as the education of 60 children. Ireland is thus in the happy position under English rule of being obliged to pay more for police than for education.

As to the army and navy, Holland and Sweden, with revenues considerably less than that which Ireland is forced to pay to England, maintain armies and navies quite adequate to the task of protecting the neu-

trality of those countries; and if Ireland had been independent, like Holland and Sweden, Ireland would, like them, have been kept out of the war, and her taxation would be considerably less than it is to-day. It costs Bulgaria, the efficiency of whose army none may deny, £200,000 a year less for military purposes than it costs Ireland for the R.I.C. As to Ireland being prepared to run the risk of a hostile British tariff against Irish goods, Ireland smiles broadly at the idea. It happens that Ireland imports more goods from England than any other country in the world imports from England with the exception of the United States. The annual value of the Irish market to England is £135,000,000, and the loss of that market, which would follow her "hostile tariffs," would be a greater economic blow to England than the loss of the combined markets of Germany and France, or the combined markets of Russia, Italy, Spain, Austro-Hungary, Japan, Belgium and Portugal, which all taken together do not buy annually so much goods from England as Ireland does. This fact, hitherto little grasped by the people of Ireland, is one of the salient facts of the situation—Ireland is England's richest market.

Last week we sketched the history of Alsace-Lorraine, the two German provinces which France purloined from Germany in the eighteenth century, and which Germany won back in the nineteenth. Since the English Press at the present time professes to regard Alsace-Lorraine as a part of France, thirsting to be "restored," and paints Germany's action in 1870 as cruel, unjustifiable, and an outrage on the principle of nationality, the following quotations from the leading organs in the English Press in 1870—which the "Cambridge Magazine" has re-published—will illustrate British sincerity. On the 20th of August, 1870, France then being down; the London "Daily News" wrote:—

There is no longer any question as to whether the Germans will take or rather retake Alsace; but rather as to whether, having retaken it, they will give it up. Some 200 years years back Louis XIV. stole it. The lapse of years may hide a theft, but not the justification of re-conquest. The population of Alsace is German by origin, by language, and by custom.

And on the 14th of September in the same year the London "Times" wrote:—

Till the French are ready to recognise that they have acted unjustly towards their neighbours, and to offer sureties against a repetition of such conduct, the fair demands of the Germans (40 milliards and Alsace-Lorraine) cannot be considered unsatisfactory. We can assure France, if she finds these conditions hard, that there are many persons in Germany who consider them remarkably light, and who would be only too pleased to complain at their hereditary enemy getting off so lightly. Alsace-Lorraine—we mean German Lorraine, in other words the possession of Metz and a small strip of Lorraine with the Vosges and Alsace—is the minimum condition the peace-loving German can accept as the basis of peace.

Observe that in 1870—France then being regarded by England as her most dangerous enemy, and therefore "Huns"—the peace of Europe depended on Alsace-Lorraine being retroceded to Germany, whose people were "peace-loving."

We must remind our readers that "Irish Week" is being celebrated in Dublin by the usual window display of Irish-manufactured goods. The Coisde Ceannair is offering the first prize, a valuable gold medal; the Dublin Industrial Development Association is giving the second prize, which we understand is to take the form of a silver cup, and Mr. Kevin Kenny is giving a third prize for the best-dressed windows of Irish manufactured on sale. We anticipate that this year a strong effort will be made by our leading merchants to give its due place to the products of our country and to place our industries in the position they should permanently occupy. Over 200 firms are expected to compete for the prizes. It only remains for the purchasing public to do their share in giving their support to our native industries and transferring some of the immense business enjoyed by the foreigner.

We referred last week to the duty of men worthy the name of Irishmen transferring their accounts from the Belfast Banking Company and the Ulster Bank, which are now in the possession of the London City and Midland Bank and the London County and Westminster Bank respectively. The situation is rendered still more serious by the efforts being made to absorb the Munster and Leinster Bank in Cork, of which we believe Sir John Harley Scott is a director. Already the Cork Chamber of Commerce, foreseeing the evil results which will follow from these schemes, has moved to block the scheme. Sir John Scott has come into the field openly. The question raised is a vital one, but space prevents us going into it in detail in this issue. It requires a minute analysis and detailed investigation. Meanwhile we cannot allow Sir John Scott's letters to go unchallenged. In his letter dated October 17 he alleges "the coming of these big English banks, with an immense amount of money at their disposal, will in all likelihood assist the trade and commerce of the country to a degree

hitherto unknown," and he then dangles 174 millions before our covetous gaze, like a jeweller displaying diamonds in his window. But have the banks really come with this "immense amount of money"? The original proposal given out by the London City Bank was to establish a branch in Belfast. Promises were actually purchased in a central part of the Northern Capital, and it was pretended that after the war the premises would be opened, and new accounts opened, and fresh money lent. But no such thing happened. Frightened by the prospect of competition for deposits at a four per cent. rate as against 2½ ruling in Ireland, the Belfast Bank surrendered its resources into the hands of the London Bank for a deal in shares—a paper transaction in which the shareholders gained, perhaps, a fractional interest. This does not mean that the City Bank has come to Ireland, but rather that control of the Belfast Bank has been transferred to London. The same argument applies to the Ulster Bank. We fail to see the philanthropy of the London County in taking over deposits and current accounts to the value of £12,877,151 belonging to the Irish shareholders. Where does Sir John Scott's "immense amount of money" come from except from the pockets of Irish farmers? In taking over a banking company paying 2½ per cent. dividends, and one which increased its carry forward from £23,000 to £48,000 this year, the London Clearing House Bank has made a very good bargain, considering that it is getting it for a mere exchange of shares based on the average prices. As a concession we are now informed that we are to be continued in the enjoyment of being lent our own money, perhaps, and on conditions. It is significant that the Chairman of the London County stated that "the constitution of the Ulster Bank would be kept much as at present." Already the wedge-point is being thrust in. We shall have much more to say on these transactions.

The question of re-planting the country is becoming urgent every year. The Government (alleged) has no other idea except to lay the "Clutching Hand" on everything. Though the question of afforestation has been urged year after year, very little has been done, and the work of destroying our forests goes on increasing. Now that it has become supremely important to increase our plantations we have the statement of the egregious Mr. Duke—that owing to the great demand for timber there had been large fellings in Ireland during the past two years, and the Department had submitted proposals to the Development Commissioners with a view to re-planting of areas cleared and the extension of planting. The purchase of land for forestry purposes was suspended, and operations on lands already acquired were continued only so far as was necessary to prevent loss. It was anticipated that planting would be resumed at the end of the war. It is useless to expect anything to be done in this quarter. The only effective remedy is the adoption of afforestation on a national scale, by the celebration of Arbour Day (first Saturday in November), and by enlisting the aid of schools and societies. If everybody planted one tree a year more would be done in a few years than by a million promises on the part of the alleged Government. Planting is compulsory in most European countries. For every tree cut three should be planted.

Though we are the least planted country in Europe, no less than several hundred thousand tons must have been taken out of the country for war and other purposes, according to the estimate of an expert in the native timber trade. Never before has Irish round timber reached such a high price. It is now, we believe, as dear as English timber. The imports of foreign timber are almost entirely ceased, and the destruction of war, truly incredible in its consumption of timber, will render it very scarce and dear for a very long period. Many owners of estates, with their grand old timber, are tempted to sell off their standing trees, wholesale. The property of Castlewellan, renowned for its parks and gardens, is the latest coming under the hammer. No less than 54,000 Scots fir, silver fir, larch, spruce, Spanish chestnut, sycamore, oak, alder, birch, and even holly are offered in the market. This wholesale slaughter of priceless woods is lamentable. Nothing can excuse such folly and shortsightedness. Ten thousand silver firs of renowned beauty are to be offered in one parcel. The priceless labour of generations is to be sacrificed by the fall of the hammer and the stroke of the axe. "There is a national danger that the example of this mercenary owner will be followed, and the last remnant of our once beautiful woods and renowned forests swept away. We hope steps will be taken to stop these atrocities.

The effect of this destruction has also a very important industrial aspect. Many of our trades depend on the supply of local timber, and hitherto the inland districts, inaccessible to transportation by sea, have escaped. But now they are in danger of being cut off from home supplies, and must perish. We cannot understand why spruce should be offered "in pitwood sizes," as in Lot No. 7 of the projected sale at Castlewellan. Surely the paper scarcity demands that spruce should be reserved for our paper mills instead of trying to get a ship to send it to the mines. So valuable is paper pulp

that a Scandinavian firm has offered nearly seven millions to buy the Kellner Partington Paper Pulp Company in Manchester, at six pounds for each one pound share!

The principal run is on the soft coniferous woods for egg-cases and butter-boxes. Immense quantities of Scots fir, spruce, elm, larch, poplar, birch, and beech are sought by ammunition-box makers. The hard woods have not been touched to anything like the same extent as the soft woods, though beech and oak are being requisitioned for railway sleepers and other purposes. The relative consumption of soft and hard woods is reflected in the prices, the former being five times and the latter double the pre-war quotations. The only difficulty in clearing Ireland entirely of timber is the lack of transportation, and the difficulty of getting timber from remote hill-sides, and the scarcity of shipping. If the resources of native timber are permitted to be exhausted, the situation will become exceedingly critical for the next generation. Tillage, housing, stores, granaries, factories and wood-working industries will be seriously affected. There is not a moment to be lost in starting a grand campaign to re-plant the whole island.

When we were boys there was a picture popular in British and West-British houses representing Queen Victoria presenting an Ethiop Prince, who implored her to tell him the secret of England's greatness, with a copy of the Bible. Here comes a reader who wants to know that same secret from us. We shall not refer him to the Bible.

The Frenchman who described the English as the people of only one genius—the genius of exploitation—summed up that nation, but the summary does not sufficiently convey to the average mind a perfect picture. Tolstol's description of the English as the most brutal of all civilized peoples is a truth, but it does not explain the position England attained. The Spaniard Balmes, in his great work on "European Civilization," written nearly twenty years ago, when England was in the zenith of her power, very clearly shows the mainstays of English strength and policy. Thus he writes of England:—

"There is in Europe a nation remarkable for her immense power and worthy of respect on account of the good progress she has made in the arts and sciences—a nation which holds in her hands powerful means of action in all parts of the world and knows how to use them with wonderful discretion and sagacity. As that nation has taken the lead in modern times in passing through all the phases of political and religious revolution, and has seen during fearful convulsions the passions in all their nakedness and crime in all its forms, she is better acquainted than all others with their causes.

"Not misled by the vain names under which, at such periods, the lowest passions and the most sordid interests disguise themselves, she is too much on her guard to allow the troubles which have inundated other countries with tears and blood, to be easily excited within herself. Her internal peace is not disturbed by the agitation and heat of disputes; although she may expect to have to encounter, sooner or later, difficulties and embarrassments, she enjoys, in the meantime, the tranquillity which is secured to her by her Constitution, her manners, her riches—and, above all, by the ocean which surrounds her. Placed in so advantageous a position, that nation watches the progress of others, for the purpose of attaching them to her car by golden chains, if they are simple enough to listen to her flattery; at least she attempts to hinder their advance, when a noble independence is about to free them from her influence. Always attentive to her own aggrandisement, by means of the arts and commerce, and by a policy eminently mercantile, she hides her self-interest under all sorts of disguises; and although religion and politics, where she has to do with another people, are quite indifferent to her, she knows how to make an adroit use of these powerful arms to make friends, to defeat her enemies, and to enclose all within the net of commerce, which she is always extending in all quarters of the world. There is no other nation which conceives her plans with so much foresight, prepares them with so much prudence, executes them with so much ability and perseverance. As she has remained since her great revolutions, that is, since the end of the 17th century, in a settled condition, and entirely free from convulsions undergone since that time by other European nations, she has been able to follow a regular political system, both internal and external; and her politicians have been formed to the perfect science of government, by constantly inheriting the experience and views of their predecessors. Her statesmen well know how important it is to be prepared before-hand for every event. They deeply study what may aid or impede them in other nations. They go out of the sphere of politics; they penetrate to the heart of every nation over which they propose to extend their influence; they examine what are the conditions of its existence; what is its vital principle; what are the causes of the strength and energy of every people."

That is England—England as it was before the rise of Germany. That is the England

which is struggling desperately to reassert its mastery of the world to-day. That is the England—subtle, strong, experienced, conscienceless—that Ireland has to deal with. All that Balmes says the Frenchman said when he described England as the genius of exploitation, England's name will never perish while mankind continue to exist. Her history will be read for the philosopher for a thousand years. He will trace her marvellous rise, her long period of ascendancy in a world in which she was intellectually and morally largely inferior; he will point out that, also, among the vanished Empires, she added nothing to civilisation and discovered no new truth, and yet became materially greater than any of her predecessors; he will show that she never civilised, nor was she ever capable of civilising; he will seek for some precedent—some parallel for her, and find none, though regarding her, he will see as in a glass darkly Carthage. But the genius of exploitation, he will allow her in a measure nor Carthage, nor Rome, nor Spain, nor France possessed. In the English he will see a remarkable people, intellectually inferior to the French, Spanish, Irish, German or Scandinavian, and yet for a space defeating or dominating them all. And the secret of England's power, he will point out, was cunning—the cunning understanding of the weaknesses of human nature, and the cunning use of that understanding to keep the world in arms arrayed against itself—a world in commerce hostile to itself—and he will show that the genius of her Empire was the evil but potent genius of exploitation, opposed to the genius of civilisation.

The corruption that pervades all English public life—from the Parish Council to the Imperial Parliament—is patent to any person who lives in England for a year or two, but the magnificent organisation of the English Press always hitherto kept it well suppressed. The French drag their financial scandals out into the light of day—the English suppress them—the London Corporation would not touch the docks for a financial scandal, the Lloyd George-Marcou scandals—all those, which in France would have involved the fall of Government—and the disappearance of the actors in them—were kept well in hand by the English Press; but latterly the corrupt misuse of public money by the Government to down its opponents has caused some pretty revelations. Mr. Lloyd George and his friends Carson and Milner are anxious to destroy Mr. Asquith. One of the Government Press Bureaux, therefore, run by a man named Pratt, a Scots M.P., on public money, has been sending out free "London Letters" to Scots newspapers, in the course of which attacks are made on Asquith. Pratt also, while doing his bit for Lloyd George, uses the public money to boost himself. If what is being done with public money in this connection—using it for private ends—were done by men in private life, they would be liable to arrest and imprisonment for malversation. There is nothing quite like English justice—its respect for persons has no parallel.

At the same time Sir Edward Carson, as head of the Propaganda Department is doing his bit. We find in the "Journal de Geneve" an article on Ireland, which proves quite clearly that Ireland under the British Government is exceptionally prosperous, happy, and mistress of her own destinies. How much the "Journal de Geneve" has been paid for inserting the article we cannot say, but at a franc a line it would be worth to that organ some £8.

All who are interested in Irish music will be glad of the opportunity of hearing Father O'Flynn of Cork, who is to deliver a public lecture in Dublin next Sunday, under the auspices of Craobh na Cuig eCuigi. On Saturday evening Father O'Flynn will speak at the Dublin College of Irish, 20 Kildare St., at a meeting of students of the College and their friends.

We miss from the suggested Commission consisting of Georgian nominees, to "govern" Ireland until the Peace Conference has dissolved, any representation from the actual Government of Ireland. May we suggest that Mr. Max Green and Dr. McCormack should be co-opted to represent the Prisons Board?

A correspondent writes to us:—At the invitation of the Government, a certain number of prominent English journalists have been brought over to Dublin, including Mr. Gardiner of the "Daily News," Mr. Leach of the "Manchester Guardian," and Mr. Arnold Bennett. The latter is staying at the house of Mr. James O'Connor, Attorney-General. The object is to create a Castle Press. Through the writings of these journalists English public opinion is to be moulded favourably to actions of the Castle. The men have been lectured upon several occasions by Sir William Byrne. Mr. Bennett is said to resent this, while Mr. Leach of the "Manchester Guardian" believed he had been sent over independently.

Will the Rev. Fr. Hannon send us his address, which we have mislaid. Some letters await him at our office.



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# NATIONALITY.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd, 1917.

## SINN FEIN

Our readers will understand that the ex-  
igencies of the past week have limited our  
time to prepare the present issue of "Natio-  
nality." The Tenth Convention of Sinn Féin  
has unified the movement, defined its ob-  
jective, and clearly declared its policy. Sinn  
Féin claims on behalf of Ireland an equal  
independence with that which Belgium, Ser-  
bia, and Poland seek, and which England,  
Germany and France possess. That claim it  
intends shall be presented to the Peace Con-  
ference, and "the Irish question" be thus  
rescued from the position it has occupied for  
117 years—the position of an internal ques-  
tion of British politics—and definitively erec-  
ted into a question of international status.

The first step to the Peace Conference is  
the repudiation by Ireland of England's right  
to rule in this country, and the withdrawal of  
moral sanction to the exercise in our country  
of foreign authority. This step is taken when  
Ireland withdraws from the British Parlia-  
ment. Ireland has taken that step. So far  
as opportunity has been afforded the electors  
of Ireland they have renounced that Parlia-  
ment. The renunciation is the key-position  
of Irish National politics. Until it was  
gained Ireland's feet were not on firm  
ground. It was the fundamental for which  
Sinn Féin struggled when it opened on this  
day ten years in Manorhamilton the political  
battle. On the 1st of November, 1907, the  
Leitrim town called on Ireland to renounce  
the British Parliament. On the 1st of  
November, 1917, Ireland replies that she has  
renounced that foreign and baneful institu-  
tion.

The second step is the convocation of an  
Irish Parliament—a Constituent Assembly  
chosen by the people of Ireland to meet in  
the capital, deliberate on the affairs of the  
Nation, and direct the Nation's activities.  
From this Assembly, endowed with the moral  
authority and sustained by the material re-  
sources of the Nation, will go forth, with  
authority, the demand of Ireland  
for political restoration. Speaking in  
Ireland's name, the Constituent Assembly  
will lay before the Peace Conference the claim  
of Ireland to choose and erect its own in-  
dependent Government, and, loosed from  
England, to enter the comity of European  
Nations.

Such will be the high purpose of the Con-  
stituent Assembly; but other purposes it  
must have. It must act for Ireland, to the  
extent of its powers, which will be the powers  
of the people of Ireland, as the Senate of a  
Free Nation would act. It must conserve,  
develop, and treat. It must, thinking no-  
thing of England's interests, or any in-  
terests but our own, harness Irish energy

and activity to the national and economic  
as well as to the political revival and de-  
velopment of the Nation. It must look to  
our industries and our commerce, and pro-  
tect and develop them; it must choose Irish  
Consuls, and encourage an Irish mercantile  
marine; it must deal with questions of edu-  
cation, of land, of labour, of pauperism, and  
of finance, and deal with them to the end  
of exalting the power and status of the Irish  
people. In a word, it must undo what Pitt  
did, when he struck down Ireland by the  
Act of Union, and, drawing the eyes and  
thoughts and hopes of our people to London,  
loft Ireland nationally, politically, and eco-  
nomically defenceless against England's de-  
structive policy. It must concentrate Irish  
thought and energy in Ireland and for Ire-  
land. It must restore Ireland a centre  
—a National axis on which to revolve.

In nine months the country has been won  
and organised for Sinn Féin. In the next  
few months the same energy will be directed  
to educate the country in every phase of  
the Sinn Féin policy. Before the spring  
comes we hope to have an Ireland as Nation-  
ally, politically, and economically instructed  
as Thomas Davis would have desired. For  
it is from Thomas Davis we derive Sinn  
Féin. "The first step towards Nationality,"  
he wrote, "is the open and avowed recog-  
nition of it by the Irish people themselves."  
The Irish people have taken that step. They  
have declared themselves by the method  
which the world accepts—the considered vote  
of the electorate—a separate and distinct  
nation. They are in the march for freedom,  
realising their right, and convinced that God  
designs for them a glorious destiny.

## IRELAND AND THE SEAS

The enormous destruction of mercantile  
shipping exceeds what has been lost in all  
the previous wars put together. The con-  
tention that private property should be ex-  
empted from seizure at sea, and the claim  
that commerce should be immune, is dealt  
with in prophetic fashion by Admiral Mahan  
in his work on "The Interest of America  
in Sea Power," written in 1897. He dis-  
cusses the matter in his chapter on Anglo-  
American re-union, and dismisses the idea  
that any arrangement or treaty or alliance  
between the United States and Great Britain  
or any other country can secure immunity  
at sea. He argues that all maritime nations  
more or less depend for their prosperity upon  
maritime commerce, and probably upon it  
more than upon any other single factor. It  
is no more possible for a belligerent to keep  
his hands off his enemy's commerce at sea  
than for a general to refrain from attacking  
his enemy's line of communications. Mahan  
asserts that "the concession of immunity  
to what is unthinkingly called the 'private  
property' of an enemy at sea will never  
be conceded by a nation or alliance confident  
in its own sea power." Immunity has been  
"the dream of the weaker sea belligerents  
in all ages." Again he writes (p. 133):—

"Well, it is not clear that maritime com-  
merce occupies to the power of a maritime  
state, the precise nourishing function that  
the communications of an army supply to  
the army? Blows at commerce are blows  
at the communications of the state; they  
intercept its nourishment, they starve its  
life, they cut the roots of its power, the  
sinews of its war."

The views of Admiral Mahan display the  
insight of genius. He clearly foresaw that  
it was a sign of weakness for Great Britain  
to concede to neutrals the principle that the  
flag covers the goods. We admit that the  
question is the most difficult of all inter-  
national ones, while claiming that Mahan  
alone seems to have clearly foreseen the  
course of the present war, and to have an-  
ticipated the futile efforts of humanitarians  
to protect commerce by international regu-  
lations which could never be put into prac-  
tice. He concludes by writing that "It is a  
fair deduction from analogy that two con-  
tending armies might as well agree to re-  
spect each other's communications as two  
belligerent states to guarantee immunity to  
hostile commerce."

It is necessary for Irishmen to be on their  
guard against the piffle which is constantly  
written on this subject in the English Press  
and is copied by the Darwinian Press in Ire-  
land. There is a danger that the ques-  
tion of the freedom of the seas may be  
seriously misunderstood from failure to  
understand that every country puts for-  
ward proposals to suit its own interests  
and endeavours to claim rights which are  
in conflict with the interests of their com-  
petitors or opponents. Opinions may differ  
as to the best method of securing the free-  
dom of the seas for all nations, but what-  
ever method is adopted must have as its  
object a system of protected trade routes  
with suitable bases. It is not a question of  
international right so much as one of mak-  
ing international arrangements to prevent  
the interruption of maritime trade in war.  
In any such arrangement, so far as it con-  
cerns the western Atlantic, Ireland must  
play a very important part from the cen-  
trality of her position.

We are a maritime nation, and our pros-  
perity must depend on our maritime com-  
merce. Yet it is only a few weeks ago that  
this principle was scoffed at by the states-  
men who are supposed to represent public  
opinion in Ireland. But we are fortified in  
our views by the greatest naval expert  
the world has ever known, an American of  
Irish parentage. A study of Mahan is  
essential to everybody who would under-  
stand the position of our country. Not  
merely is maritime commerce a prime factor  
in our prosperity, but we go much further.  
We assert that Ireland is the maritime  
centre of the world, and that the fortunes  
of our country depend entirely on the real-  
isation of this fact, which will become clear  
to all nations before the war is over. This  
is the explanation of England's instinctive  
dread of us, and her reluctant hate and  
mistrust. But geographical positions are  
stubborn things, and we are equally stub-  
born. No sentiment of conciliation will alter  
the situation, to quote a MacMahon this  
time. "We are here, and we intend to

stay here," and England will have to make  
the best of her position while we realise  
ours.

The commerce of the seas must in future  
traverse routes which can be rendered the  
safest in time of war. There are three fac-  
tors governing safety:—

Shortness of route;  
Protectability;  
Accommodation.

These three factors all favour Irish ports.  
It should be borne in mind that neither  
capitalists nor shipowners will go to great  
expense to establish routes which cannot  
be maintained in war. There will also be a  
great expansion of American sea traffic as  
a result of the war, and there must be a  
corresponding development at our side.  
Already the United States is planning to  
raise her mercantile overseas fleet to ten  
million gross tonnage next year, or four  
times her present capacity, not to mention  
her six millions of coasting tonnage. The  
carrying capacity of the United States ships  
in service and on the stocks will be 15  
million tons deadweight, or 120 million tons  
cargo, reckoning eight voyages in the year.  
A very large proportion, much the largest  
part, must find accommodation at our side.  
Apart from the very important question of  
an Irish mercantile fleet, we have to pre-  
pare to receive our share of America's ton-  
nage and to handle quickly and safely a  
due proportion of European freight. We  
have all the natural advantages for such  
operations. The experience of the war has  
proved that harbours approached by chan-  
nels or straits are dangerous, and that traffic  
must be directed as far as possible to ports  
open to the ocean.

As regards the position of English ship-  
ping, the following information was trans-  
mitted from London in a special cable, dated  
September 24th, 1917, to the "New York  
Times." We extract the following from it—  
"After the first nine months of the sub-  
marine campaign, averaging a weekly de-  
struction, including sinkings by raiders, of  
almost 150,000 tons, July and August showed  
an average of slightly more than 116,000  
tons a week. As indicated in despatches, the  
naval authorities were gratified, but not  
satisfied, with this reduction, recognising  
the fact that, while destruction aggregating  
450,000 tons a month was less than that of  
600,000, it was still much greater than the  
situation would stand, as it was exceeding  
the building rate by approximately 300,000  
tons a month. The first week in September  
showed a further improvement, and then  
came the second week, with a decrease of  
nearly 50 per cent. The figures, when trans-  
lated into tons, show much the smallest loss  
in any week since the 'frightfulness'  
began in February. The figures for the week  
ending September 16 were 62,000 tons, as  
against a weekly average in August of  
118,000 tons, for July of 115,000 tons, and  
for the first six months of 135,000 tons,  
inclusive of losses by raiders."

X.

## AMAZING ENGLAND

West of England, Thursday.  
I have made a discovery, I have discovered  
what the "Hidden Hand" is. It is a secret  
society of the most select and exclusive kind,  
and it is supposed to be in direct touch with  
a similar organisation in Germany. This is  
really amazing—almost incredible. I learned  
that no one with an income of less than five  
thousand a year can become a member. There  
is an inner circle, and it is only the  
members of this inner circle know exactly  
what the aims of the society are. But some  
of its actions are public property. It is one  
of the most powerful cliques in the country,  
and controls various organisations. I was  
privileged to have a chat with a personage  
in close touch with some of its activities,  
and he assured me that it has immense  
power, influence, and resources, and that  
its influence is not confined to England, but  
that it has branches abroad, notably in  
Rome. How it can continue its sinister oper-  
ations during the great war is one of the  
mysteries of the age, and shows a condition  
of affairs here that few outsiders would  
suspect. What its connection with the re-  
volutionary movement of the "National"  
Party is no one knows. All that is certain  
is that it has friends in the Berlin Foreign  
Office, as some public incidents from time to  
time have shown. How far Baron North-  
cliffe is influenced by it it is difficult to es-  
timate, but he certainly seems aware of  
many of its doings. The "Hidden Hand"  
is so powerful that it has time and again  
defied D.O.R.A. Some extraordinary tales  
are told of how it has sheltered slackers and  
other undesirable characters by the employ-  
ment of terrorism or other means. Even the  
War Office at times cowers before it. It has  
great influence among financial magnates,  
so much so that—will it be believed at your  
side of the Channel?—German banks still  
operate in this country, notwithstanding the  
outbreak of 1914, and the lessons the au-  
thorities in this country ought to have learned  
of Hun machinations. Such is the "Hid-  
den Hand."

Yesterday afternoon after sending you  
my last despatch, I journeyed to Cardiff to  
hear one of the chiefs of the new revolution-  
ary movement of the "Profiteers" expound  
the doctrines of the Party. His name is  
familiar to your readers since the insurrec-  
tion of the spring, when he assumed com-  
mand of an important area and showed  
much military genius in the district known  
as Whitehall. It is George Lloyd David of  
whom I speak, associated in the public mind  
with that other fire-eating rebel Carson Ed-  
wards. They are indeed a precious pair of  
picturesque "Profiteers." I do not wish to  
dictate to our Government, but it is evident  
to many that some of the antics of David's  
bosom friend, Edwards, will need watching.  
Well, I got to Cardiff after a weary  
journey. But that I had fortunately brought  
some bread and cheese with me and a bottle  
of lemon squash I would have fared worse.  
The accommodation on the trains here is  
wretched. Not a morsel to eat! Not a  
drop to drink! You cannot even buy a  
cigar. I asked a guard if I could get a box  
of matches. "Bless your heart," said he,  
"matches are scarce as sugar these times."  
I knew what he meant. Cardiff itself is  
one of those black, dirty, drab, "indus-  
trial" towns, given over to immense fire-  
bricks, tall chimneys, soot, smoke and  
coal. When the train slowed down outside  
the town I thought sadly what a very lazy,  
dirty, slumbering and unpractical people the  
English are. Here was a splendid country-  
side where green fields might have been seen,







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