

ACCEPT PEACE WITH HONOR, PLEA TO ERIN BY SIR PHILIP GIBBS

Do Not Hark Back to Mediocrity, but Be Up With Times, He Urges.

BEGS AS A BROTHER Sees Europe Hang in Balance; Hopes to Avert Conflict More Serious.

VENDETTA DAYS PASSING Writer Declares Only Sentiment Prevents Britain From Downfall.

By SIR PHILIP GIBBS.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK HERALD. Copyright, 1921, by THE NEW YORK HERALD. LONDON, Sept. 10.—As an Englishman who loves liberty and Ireland, which has struggled for liberty through the long agony of her history, I venture to write an appeal to the Irish race throughout the world, not written coldly but with the emotion which stirs me and thousands of other Englishmen in a poignant way at the thought that the truce between Ireland and England may give way to a renewed and more tragic conflict.

I have only this recommendation to make to the Irish people: In so far as I could help their claim for self-government as a writing man and public speaker I did so at times when such words were dangerous and unpopular, though in America, by a strange paradox, Irish men and women howled me down when I spoke upholding their right to life and liberty as far as advocating the same home rule that is now offered them.

It is not as a man of public influence, for I have none, that I write this address to the Irish race, but as an ordinary Englishman with liberal ideas and faith in the future of humanity and who hates war, having seen the great massacre in France and Flanders from first to last.

See Challenge to England.

In the first place I feel that if after this offer of dominion home rule with certain conditions that are capable of alteration over the conference table, Irish leaders declare for war rather than peace it will be a chal-

lenge not only to England but to all men and women of good will in all parts of the world that now after the awful lessons of the great war and the blunders of peace making are trying to demobilize the standing armies and to enlarge the boundaries of democratic liberty by a wider brotherhood of the human family.

At the present day, after the dark years of peace following the red years of war, there is for the first time a sign of a forward movement being made by the leaders of the peoples of the world. The national hatreds engendered by the war are beginning to die down. Human charity, as expressed in the relief given the starving children of Europe and which now offers to aid the famine stricken people of Russia, has relit its lamps which shine above the heart of darkness. Even some of the old leaders who thrust civilization back to national selfishness and cynicism have had a change of heart or change of policy and under the pressure of world opinion, which is gathering weight and momentum, have declared for a programme of international reconciliation and appeasement.

I feel therefore that the Irish people will be flinging themselves across this movement to better the state of civilized relationship if they reject the full reality of liberty offered them for the sake of an abstract ideal of liberties which are not necessary to their honor or their souls. They will be harking back to mediocrity and not linking up with modern progress in democratic liberty if they insist on separation and isolated nationality, for that is a medieval idea that has given place to larger views of human duty and relationship.

World Has Moved On.

The world has moved on since Ireland had sixty kings and England a heptarchy. It has moved on since the war between the North and the South in America. It is moving toward a larger federation of free peoples as within the British Empire, to an international code of justice, and it is the conviction of all leading minds to-day, based not on theory but on plain and terrible facts, that if Europe does not abandon the old evil of national vendettas and link up along closer lines in similar federations Europe will be utterly ruined.

That is the large aspect of Ireland's claim for separation and isolation and the one that will go with separation. But there are other aspects more immediate and visible to ordinary Englishmen. Ireland maintains her right to absolute separation as a nation foreign to England in blood, in speech and in history. But few Englishmen can admit that because so many of them would be repudiating the women, their wives or mothers, would be denying their own blood, falsifying their knowledge of

history and repudiating their old comrades who were not foreigners. Irish blood has mixed for centuries with English blood. There are thousands of British families, the noblest among them, who have good drops of it from some Irish rose who caught an English heart. All through history for 500 years the Irish have fought side by side as well as against Englishmen, and on the battlefields of Europe in recent years, where I saw them with forgetful eyes, Irish youth lay dead with English youth and there was no enmity between them before they died, but a great comradeship.

Irish on English Honor Roll.

Irish names, heroic names, are emblazoned with British names on scrolls of honor throughout the Empire, which they made together. Now in England and throughout the Empire Irishmen hold high office, administer British laws and work in fellow service wherever the rule of the British race reaches.

To me therefore no Irishman is a foreigner. His blood is my blood, though I am English. If he asks for absolute separation he asks for something that few Englishmen can give without opening the veins in their bodies if they know their ancestry.

All the ancient wrong in Irish history cannot, alas, be wiped out and their memories are still frightful in Irish brains. In English brains too, if they know that history, yet put into historic proportion by the thought that there were cruelties in England no less than in Ireland; that the penal laws in England were just as barbarous; that the Irish peasant even in the worst days was not so enslaved and stunted and brutalized as the women and children in the Lancashire mills during the evil days of industrial tyranny; that the men who crushed the liberties of Ireland crushed the liberties of England too, and that as English democracy struggled up to its older freedom the English made amends, some amends, in Ireland by land laws which gave soil to Irish peasants and by municipal government.

Memories to Rankle Irish.

It was not enough. It is not enough yet, and in recent years there have been new memories to rankle in Irish hearts—the folly of British officials, their narrow intolerance, and then, worst of all, arrests, hangings, shootings, raids, reprisals and terror.

I sickened over all that agony like many Englishmen who thought and still think that the tragic episodes besmirched our good name because two blacks do not make white. But the Irish must be fair to those who face them, must acknowledge in their hearts that many things were done by Sinn Feiners that were cruel and abominable according to the laws of

God and man, and that their acts of war could not be ignored by the British Government without abject surrender and cowardice not to be expected of British people.

But all that black nightmare has been lifted by the truce which gives us all a chance for looking forward to light instead of back to darkness. The offer made by Premier Lloyd George not only formally but in his speeches and letters is a great act of statesmanship which expresses the spirit of the whole English people and fulfils the hopes of all lovers of liberty throughout the world.

Sees Everlasting Question.

He has put aside all petty arguments for the great principle of a free partnership in the British federation of free peoples. Such a thing will never happen again in our time,

for when the present Government breaks up, as it is now breaking, the question of Ireland would be flung again into the arena of party politics and the present sympathy of the English people would be dissolved by new appeals to passion and prejudice by unscrupulous politicians.

The old call of coercion would be made, the old cruelties always dominant in human hearts would be re-stirred and Ireland herself in rejecting a fair offer of liberty would play into the hands of the bigots and militarists who are now mostly silent.

To the ordinary Englishman it appears that some of the Irish irreconcilables are behaving now in what used to be called the feminine way of making use of their weakness as a weapon against the strength of men by daring a brutal male to hit them or be cruel to them, knowing

that their own weakness protects them and would disarm a man in spite of all exasperation.

What England Could Do.

If England really intended to dominate Ireland by sheer brute force—which may God prevent—it is certain that she could do so, despite the desperate courage of Irish youths. It would be bloody and horrible. English losses would be heavy, but Ireland would be reduced to death and ashes. Why this has not been done before and why it will never be done is not through lack of strength, but lack of will. It is no answer to say that England tried to do so and failed before the truce.

All that was done in military repression and reprisals was limited by the impossibility to let the militarists have full command of military

resources and conduct the war as they wished. It was a secret, half-hearted, furtive attempt to deal with terror by counter terror and not to wage open war against declared enemies.

The English public opinion would not be persuaded then or now to declare real war against her sister nation, and two-thirds of what was done in Ireland was done without English knowledge.

I write these things with one object in view only, which is to call to the generosity of the Irish race throughout the world so that they may strengthen the hands of the peacemakers, to appeal to them for great heartedness bigger than the little nigglings of cheap logic debate and to yield just a little to English pride and sentiment as they are yielding to theirs. Between the Irish race and the

British race there is a chance for lasting brotherhood made close and dear because of old tragedies blotted out by forgiveness and future hope when the Irish nation takes her place on equal terms among the free peoples of the British Empire.

Deliberately to fling away that chance on points of pride would seem to me a wickedness at which angels might weep because of the human folly of it. Irish Catholics belong to a faith which preaches a higher law even than liberty, which is charity and love. For Christ's sake let them make this good peace, which gives liberty to Ireland if she will only be loyal to the commonwealth of peoples from whom she cannot separate without the betrayal of natural ties and the noblest ideals which now inspire the hope of the world.



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