

THE Servant of India

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE arrest of the Ali brothers has not come as a surprise to any one. They and Mr. Gandhi have more than once referred to it as an impending event and exhorted their followers not to be excited over it. At the Madras beach meeting Mr. Gandhi spoke of Mr. Muhammad Ali's arrest as a Godsend to his movement but could not however understand it, for after the famous apology, he had almost always been with Mr. Muhammad Ali and could bear testimony to his having observed the undertaking in letter and spirit. Mr. Gandhi, however, did not know at that time that the arrests were made in connection with speeches delivered by the brothers at Karachi on the occasion of the All-India Khilafat Conference at which Mr. Gandhi was not present and that they were intended to affect the loyalty of His Majesty's troops. Lord Reading cannot with justice be accused of having gone back upon his promise to Mr. Gandhi about not prosecuting the brothers, because questions affecting the loyalty of the army were not discussed between them. Incitement to violence is a second ground on which the brothers are to be tried. We have not yet seen the reports of those speeches but we should be inclined to believe that Government who tolerated sedition on so many occasions and ignored even open challenges now felt compelled to take action. The arrest and trial of the brothers was only a question of time for it was bound to come after the resolutions they helped to pass at Karachi about declaring an independent republic and other matters. We are glad that the news has been received by the public with commendable restraint.

It must be pretty embarrassing to the Working Committee of the Congress to discover that the opinion which it so boldly published to the world about the number of forced conversions to Islam by

the Moplahs being only three, was based on an utterly unreliable report and that one of the General Secretaries of the Congress itself should be able to authenticate as many as fifty cases. The special correspondent of a responsible newspaper affirms that he knows of 75 such cases, while it is obvious that owing to the present disturbed condition of the area and fear of social consequences a number of cases could not have come to light. It is amusing that Mr. Yakub Hasan should have been able to discover among them some spontaneous conversions. Fortunately, the readmission to Hindu society of these unhappy victims of savage fanaticism does not appear to be as difficult as it was feared it would be. When even the exclusive Nambudri Brahmins are ready to readmit these converts to their fold the other castes will not raise any objections. But one grave danger has been pointed out. The fanatical Moplah will not tolerate an apostate and will rather consider it a great merit to murder him. Several such instances are reported to have occurred in the past. We therefore think it the duty of all Muslim leaders who want to preserve the Hindu-Muslim unity to induce Ulemas, Thangals and others whose words carry weight with the Moplahs to issue a *fatwa* that forcible conversions are against the injunctions of the Koran and that those who have been converted to Islam against their wishes should be freely allowed to go back to their religion if they want to do so. We hope Mr. Gandhi will interest himself in this matter.

IN disclaiming responsibility for the Moplah outbreak, Congress and Khilafat workers are arguing as if every one of them was accused of attempting to bring about a revolution in the country by violent means. No such accusation is made against them except perhaps by the most prejudiced Anglo-Indian journals. Those who urged, nay implored, Mr. Gandhi not to embark on his non-co-operation propaganda readily admitted that he would do his best to keep it on non-violent lines, but pointed out that once it undermined the respect which people had for constituted authority, violence would somehow break out and then no amount of preaching would be of any avail. They also urged that people with violent and criminal tendencies who are kept in check in normal times would join his movement and create opportunities for themselves. All these fears have come only too true in Malabar. The badmashes pooh-pooched the Congress workers

when they implored them to be non-violent in the name of Mr. Gandhi and indulged themselves in all sorts of repulsive orgies. When he started the movement Mr. Gandhi was so sure of the non-violent nature of the people that he even said he would go away to the Himalayas if violence broke out. But now he thinks that where violence has broken out his propaganda should be carried on with greater intensity, that is, hatred and contempt of Government should be inculcated with greater vigour. That is the tragedy of the situation. But the responsibility remains if the propaganda created a favourable atmosphere and gave an opportunity for bad characters.

* * *

ACUTE economic distress in the disturbed area is an inevitable consequence of the wholesale looting and arson practised by the Moplahs from which at present the well to do and the poor are alike suffering. Until communications are well restored it will not be possible to take food grains to the sufferers even with the best efforts of Government and the people to do so. A local relief committee has been formed in Calicut which will no doubt be able to relieve the present acuteness of the distress. But a good deal of the relief needed, such as for families of deceased rebel Moplahs, though temporary in nature, will be of a kind that Government cannot afford and local philanthropy cannot cope with. The Congress and Khilafat organisations, under Mr. Gandhi's inspiring leadership, will certainly be able to do a good deal. There will, however, still be needed the co-operation of bodies which have not identified themselves with the Khilafat and non-co-operation movements. We trust that it will be forth coming. The Social Service League of Bombay and the Seva Samiti of Allahabad are influential bodies which can collect large sums and even depute trained workers for administering relief, as the Seva Samiti did in the Punjab after the Jallianwalla Bagh horror. The Malabar tragedy is even more heart-rending and we trust that both Hindus and Musalmans will respond nobly to the call of humanity.

* * *

WE are glad to know that a 'citizen army' of about one thousand persons has been formed in Palghat to defend the town against any contemplated attacks by the rebel Moplahs who are now reported to be several thousands strong. The efficiency of these volunteers would have been immensely greater if they had previously undergone some sort of military training. Hindus in Malabar now poignantly feel that they would not have been such helpless victims to Moplah fanaticism if they had been organised or trained for fighting purposes in emergencies. They think that the best safeguard against future outbreaks will be the formation of duly trained volunteer corps. Malabar may therefore be expected to take the fullest advantage of the new territorial force whose formation Lord Reading recently announced. But seven units for the whole of India and Burma and only one for

the Presidency of Madras are a ridiculously inadequate provision. There should be at least a separate unit for Malabar itself, considering the nature of the district and the character of its population. When the Indian section of the I. D. F. was formed during the late war, our countrymen made a great mistake in not utilising it to the full. We trust no such mistake will be made with regard to the proposed territorial force. The cause of Swaraj will be ill served by adopting an attitude of non-co-operation towards it. We are glad that this fact is understood by the Deccan Nationalists and trust that other Nationalists will also recognise it. Our duty is to press for the formation of more units and prove that even they are insufficient.

* * *

THE wrongs inflicted by the Allies, particularly by Britain, upon Turkey are much greater than those inflicted by the East India Company upon the people of India. Yet discarded foreign cloth may be sent to Smyrna and not to Khulna. A correspondent in *Young India* has asked why so. Mr. Gandhi explains that permission to send foreign cloth to Smyrna is a concession to Muslim opinion and that "the use of foreign cloth is poison in India, certainly not in Smyrna; for the cloth industry has never been Smyrna's lung as it has been India's." We do not see much force in the latter argument because Turkey is a cotton-producing country, the district of Smyrna being an important centre, which exports nearly the whole of that cotton and imports cotton goods from England, America and other countries. What is poison here is therefore poison there also. In fact, the argument would be very much in favour of Khulna which is not a cotton centre. There is then the explanation that it is a concession to Muslim opinion. If concession be permissible to Muslim opinion why should it not be equally permissible to Bengali or Khulna opinion? The fact seems to be that Muslims, like the practical people they are, have thought more of the needs of their co-religionists in Turkey than of the fanciful ethics, sin or poison, of wearing foreign cloth.

* * *

THE principal recommendation of the Railway Committee, favouring the assumption by the State of the management of railways, will meet with universal acceptance in India outside the circles of European merchants. The Indian public felt doubtful whether the Committee, weighted as it apparently was with a considerable bias against State management, would recommend even by a majority vote the system favoured by Indian opinion. The Chairman of the Committee, Sir William Acworth, had just produced a book surveying railway policy in different countries, wherein he had pronounced himself altogether in favour of company management. That he should have felt constrained on a review of Indian conditions, to advocate state management of railways, must convince all unprejudiced minds of the absolute necessity of the change. Mr. Hiley, again, with his experience confined to railways operated by private

companies also started, it may be presumed, with a prejudice in favour of company management. He too sided with the Chairman in recommending state management. On the other hand the minority of the Committee are composed exclusively of people whose interests lie in company management. We hope therefore that the Government of India will give effect to this recommendation of the Committee.

THE discussion on Mr. Joshi's resolution asking that workmen should be relieved of the criminal liability which in the present state of the law attaches to a breach of contracts of service, ended in the way in which it might have been expected to end—the Government of India offered to invite opinions of local Governments and public bodies on the question and promised to repeal the Workman's Breach of Contract Act, etc. if public opinion pronounced solidly in favour of it. We must not build our hopes on this promise because public opinion in this country is still far from being the opinion of the working classes in whose interest the change in the law is proposed. Yet, the change desired by Mr. Joshi is very simple; it only seeks to establish equality between masters and workmen. Mr. Joshi does not contend that no kind of breach of contract by workmen ought to be regarded as criminal. There is a well-defined class of offences which must be dealt with criminally, as e. g. those mentioned in the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875 in England. He would have no objection, Mr. Joshi argued, to reproducing the provisions of such a law in India. "The Brahmans of the economic world," to use Mr. Joshi's expressive phraseology, ought to be deprived of their privileged position as the Brahmans in the religious and social sphere, and all classes put on the same footing in all branches of human activity. With this end in view those who wish to raise the status of the working people must strive to educate "public opinion," which still remains predominantly bourgeois opinion.

AMONG the many telling arguments which Mr. Joshi used in support of his contention, perhaps the most telling was this, that the Government of India had been insisting on the abolition of the penal provisions in the labour laws of the colonies to which Indian labour was sent. In Ceylon, e. g. a Bill has been introduced in consequence, which is to make it impossible for a labourer to be sent to prison because he absconds, neglects his work, is insolent or disobedient, and the Malaya planters themselves are recommending similar legislation in the F. M. S. If the India Government are bringing pressure to bear upon overseas Colonies to repeal penal clauses against Indian workmen, how can they within their own borders allow laws to remain on the statute book whereby employers are enabled to punish their employees with imprisonment for a breach of contract? For it must be remembered that "the effects of the penal clauses (which the Government of India are pressing the Colonial

Governments to abolish) are to make criminal and punishable with fine and imprisonment certain acts which are essentially breaches of contract and nothing else. In the ordinary way the remedy for a breach of contract lies in damages only and not in fine and imprisonment." The Malayan *Planter* from which the preceding quotation is taken indeed compares the penal clauses to army regulations.

"The provisions of Chapter XXIV of the Labour Code are analogous to certain of the provisions of the King's Regulation for the Army, although, of course, the punishment for disobedience to others or refusal to work (for which, by the way, the punishment is provided in the Army Act and not in the King's Regulations) is considerably more severe under military discipline than under the discipline contemplated by the Labour Code. However, employers should not wish to emulate the Military code."

Nor should Indian employers wish to emulate the military code!

THE piece-goods merchants of Calcutta and Madras whom Mr. Gandhi met during the last few days presented him with some very cogent reasons against the immediate boycott of foreign cloth. They had placed large indents, they said, with manufacturers which they could not honourably cancel and delay in fulfilling obligations owing to causes beyond their control had already brought some discredit upon them. How could they then give up their business? Mr. Gandhi's advice was that they should certainly meet their obligations to the utmost and become even insolvent, but trade in foreign cloth they ought to discontinue. For those who lead an ascetic life like Mr. Gandhi and share his ideas on the value of property this advice may not be bitter, but not so to merchants who are more acquisitive than ascetic. Then they pointed out that they had large stocks on hand which they must dispose of and only a small portion of which could be re-exported, the rest being unsuitable for other markets. Mr. Gandhi's advice was that such stocks should be held over till *Swaraj* was attained, when the *Swaraj* Parliament would come to their rescue. This, Mr. Gandhi himself admitted, was a counsel of perfection and he would therefore be satisfied for the present if they promised not to place new orders. The merchants also pointed out that they were selling foreign cloth because there was a demand for it, which if they did not meet, European merchants would. Therefore it was neither useful nor right to ask them to give up their trade. Mr. Gandhi admitted the force of their argument that the consumer was the real controller of the trade but they could do propaganda work for which they were particularly well fitted. It is rather difficult to see how it is so. With their unsold foreign goods in stock one would think them otherwise. They will be able to satisfy their customers even to some extent only if they are able to offer swadeshi cloth instead of the foreign one. If, like Mr. Gandhi, they told their customers to go without clothing rather than use foreign cloth, the latter would pay no heed but go to a foreign dealer. The prospect of these merchants boycotting foreign cloth does not seem to be even as bright as that of Vakils boycotting courts or of students boycotting schools.

EQUAL JUSTICE.

INDIANS are entitled to feel intense satisfaction at the outcome of the discussion which took place on Mr. Samarth's resolution asking for the removal of all racial distinctions existing in the criminal law of the country. The Government accepted the principle of equality "between Indians and Europeans in the matter of their trial and punishment for offences" and appointed a committee which we suppose will be predominantly Indian only for the purpose of devising the best method to give effect to it. On this question of course no opposition was apprehended from Government, the Viceroy having declared his intention to abolish all racial inequalities in respect of criminal justice. But the non-official European community also did not appear as violently hostile as one might have feared from the fate that overtook the famous Ilbert Bill of Lord Ripon's time. Indeed, one cannot but marvel at the immense change that has since taken place and at the much greater respect which Indian opinion compels from those who are ranged on the opposite side. The Ilbert Bill amounted in effect to no more than conferring at that time upon two Indian members of the covenanted Civil Service jurisdiction to try European British subjects in courts outside the presidency towns and within the next few years upon some four or five more Indians who by a service of 13 to 25 years' standing would rise to be district or sessions judges. The Bill touched none of the special privileges of British subjects which were numerous, except the single one of not being tried for a criminal offence by an Indian Judicial officer in the mofussil, however high his position. Lord Ripon gave ample assurances that that measure was not the thin end of the wedge and protested that "the Government had not the least ambition of submitting any proposals then or thereafter, certainly not so long as he was there, with the view of interfering with the privileges" which the Europeans were enjoying. The Bill had the support of all local Governments and yet how did the mercantile European community take it? Sir Henry Cotton says: "The Viceroy was personally insulted at the gates of Government House. A gathering of tea-planters assembled and hooted him at a railway station as he was returning from Darjiling when "Bill" Beesford, then an A. D. C. was with difficulty restrained from leaping from the railway carriage into their midst to avenge the insult to his Chief. The non-official European community almost to a man boycotted the entertainments at Government House. Matters had reached such a pitch that a conspiracy was formed by a number of men in Calcutta, who bound themselves in the event of Government adhering to the proposed legislation, to overpower the sentries at Government House, put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal Ghat, and deport him to England round the Cape."

Compared to the present proposal, the Ilbert Bill was quite a tiny little thing. But Mr.

Samarth's resolution seeks to do away with all the rest of the distinctions. It may be useful to recite them in the words of Sir Charles Ilbert:

"As to the extent of the jurisdiction. A magistrate cannot sentence a European British subject to more than three months' imprisonment, or Rs. 1,000 fine or both. A Court of Session cannot sentence a European British subject to more than a year's imprisonment, or fine or both. (A District Magistrate can sentence an Indian to two years' imprisonment, with fine, or, in cases of cumulative sentences, and on default of the payment of the fine, to four years. A Sessions Judge may sentence an Indian to death or transportation for life.) And neither a Magistrate nor a Court of Session can sentence him to the punishment of whipping.

Then the European British subject has certain special privileges as to the mode of trials, the right of appeal, and the right to apply for release from custody. He may claim to be tried by a mixed jury or a mixed set of assessors, not less than half the number of jurors or assessors being either Europeans or Americans, or both Europeans and Americans. If he is convicted on a trial held by an Assistant Sessions Judge or a Magistrate, he may appeal to the High Court or to the Court of Session at his option. He can appeal against small sentences of fine or imprisonment from which there is no right of appeal in ordinary cases, and if he is unlawfully detained in custody he can appeal to the High Court for an order directing the person detaining him to bring him before the High Court.

Particularly the privilege with regard to a special jury was most resented by Indians, because it often ended in a denial of justice to them even when Europeans had committed grave offences. The recent Khoreal case is by no means an instance of a particularly aggravated miscarriage of justice; such cases do occur now and then and Sir William Vincent frankly admitted that in several cases within his knowledge this privilege has resulted in gross injustice. "Whatever the decision in the Assembly might be," Sir William declared, "the Government were determined that the law should be so framed as to prevent, as far as humanly possible, all failures of justice both in the case of Europeans and Indians." The only way of giving effect to this declaration is to abolish all distinctions founded on race and to notify once for all the Europeans who choose to live in India that they shall enjoy no special privileges which are not open to the rightful inhabitants of the country. Indians will for that reason be unable to respond to the appeal which was made by Mr. Rhodes on behalf of the European community that the Legislature should now offer to them of their own free will what had been granted before by an unrepresentative and irresponsible Government. Such inequalities, if allowed to remain, must inevitably lead to a failure of justice. The Committee which the Government intend to appoint must naturally consider all the practical difficulties felt by our European fellow-subjects with sympathy, but this is just a matter in which practice cannot be materially different from principle. We mean no compromise or a half-way solution of the question can be discovered, and having accepted the principle, the Government cannot stop short of giving the fullest application to it.

DECCAN SATURNALIA.

THE institution of the Ganpati Festival in the Deccan is now known all over India—it owed its origin to Mr. Tilak who started it, after the Hindu-Mahomedan riots in Bombay in 1894, as more or less a Hindu counter-blast to the Mohurrum. The celebration of this latter festival was largely participated in by the Hindus, and the leaders of orthodox Hinduism thought that the best way to withdraw their co-religionists from it was to have a public festival of their own in which the populace could exercise their religious emotions. If that was, however, the object of the founders, it was never attained, for the festival at no time in its history had a vestige of religious character about it, but became a purely anti-social-reform and anti-Government movement. It afforded a platform to politicians from which the bureaucracy and noted social reformers were denounced and the latter more vehemently than the former. Even if one sees nothing blameworthy in the attempt of the originators of this festival to harness the religious sentiments of the populace to non-religious purposes which they had at heart, one could only do so if they restricted themselves to clean methods. Even if we concede to them the right to buttress their obsolescent views in social matters and their extreme views in political matters by this means, everyone, no matter what his views might be in either of these spheres, is bound to take the strongest exception to the vile tactics which were resorted to in fighting their opponents. Because the movement was partly political, Government were driven to impose certain restraints upon their activities, but no effective restraint was ever put upon their campaign against social reformers, the general sense of the country being against social reform. Not a few of the recruits who joined the Liberal ranks in recent years were prompted to do so by the profound disgust which was awakened in them by the spectacle of Mr. Tilak approvingly listening to personal attacks levelled against Mr. Gokhale or Mr. Karve, against Mrs. Ranade or Mr. Paranjpye. A refined decorum is not Maharashtra's forte but in these carnivals no language was too indecorous and no imputation too infamous to use against the advocates of equality between man and woman, between caste and caste. Some of these attacks were printed, but many more even Poona orthodoxy dared not commit to writing—they were sung in front of the idols to large audiences with approbation of those who are now regarded as "Nationalist" leaders. A man of ordinary decency will blush to read these printed songs; what should then one say of those which even these superpatriots thought unprintable but which they took sedulous care to see would be listened to by all? The things put into the mouths of innocent children, who formed the singing parties for these celebrations, were often too obscene for words, and yet—that is the most distressing feature of this affair—the shining lights of present day

Nationalism not only entered no protest, but actually encouraged and engineered these exhibitions of unutterable indecency. It cannot too often be repeated that the leading Nationalists in the Deccan first rose to fame as opponents of social reform, and no one outside the Deccan can have an accurate idea of the utter degradation of public taste which their activities have caused. The founders of the Ganpati festival soon converted it into another Holi and made its eradication the more difficult because its appeal is addressed to the so-called educated classes. Anyhow social reformers in the Deccan are to-day faced with two Holis.

Social reform was hated of the people a decade ago, and however wrong it may have been of the leaders to use disreputable methods to counter it, it was at least natural that the opposition to social reform should express itself in these public celebrations. But things have completely changed now. What the social reformers pleaded for, apparently in vain, some thirty years ago has already passed into practice now—the social reform programme has now been almost completely adopted by the educated classes. To lash people into artificial fury against social reform at this time of the day and by such immoral methods, is the wickedest of wicked things. It may be asked, if the general public are now converted to social reform, why do they not resent these attacks against reform and reformers? The fact is, their sympathy with social reform is still passive and not active; they have grown almost unconsciously into conformity with reform, but those who practise reform do not necessarily advocate it when controversy is started. That is the strange position which social reform movements occupy at the present moment in the Deccan. Anyway the fact remains—and it is most saddening to think of it—that the vast majority of those who listen to personal attacks feel little moral indignation against the insults e.g. offered to women. We could quote scores of instances in which this year such insults were levelled. Women wearing sandals, e.g. are described as "prostitutes," for it is the orthodox idea that chaste women must go barefooted. Women ride cycles, it is said, for morality has gone down and men have lost their manhood. We cannot even quote the filthy similes used in these disgusting songs. In addition to indecency these songs contain incitement to violence. 'Smash the shop where liquor sells and back the limb that lifts the Cup' is the rendering of a couplet. We have said that there is no general sense of indignation against such obscenities; but a reaction has set in among the more reputable Nationalists including a solitary leader. There is of course a general revolt on the part of educated women. Our orthodox people affect a good deal of indignation at indecent songs in the *tamashas* of the Satyashodaks; but there could be nothing worse than any of the instances given above. If any vulgar language has crept into the songs of the Satyashodaks, we know that their leaders are bent upon their excision. There is already

considerable improvement apparent in their songs. But Nationalist leaders with the exception mentioned above feel no sense of shame at the things that are being done under their auspices and show no desire to rectify them. We wish this phase of Deccan Nationalism was understood out-side the Deccan and hope that the Deccan itself will speedily recognise its shame.

THE IRISH REPUBLIC.

THE element of surprise which enters so largely into modern life proves conclusively its character as that of a transition stage, where all things are in a flux. Last English Mail there reached India two articles on the Irish position, one entitled "The Impossible Irish," the other advocating "The Clean Cut." Before seeing them, one would have felt safe in hazarding that the first appeared in the *Morning Post* and the latter in the *New Statesman*. What could be more surprising than to find now the exact opposite? It is the *Morning Post* which opens its columns to a cogent argument by Mr. Harold Cox, who urges abandonment of the futility of trying to keep the Irish within the Empire against their will, and proving that, if the Irish are implacable, it will be safer for England to have them as a foreign nation, rather than as an enemy at their own fireside. I must say, the reasoning seems to me unassailable and I cannot understand how a paper like the *New Statesman*, which has consistently taken the line, that if the Irish want to secede, they ought to be allowed to do so, can now suddenly contemptuously dismiss "Those Impossible Irish" as idealists of the moonshine type, utterly incapable of commonsense realities.

The *New Statesman* makes merry at the expense of people who for a mere "verbal concession" would swallow Crown Colony Government, if only the latter was labelled "Republic": yet in the same breath maintains that it is impossible for England to make that merely verbal concession!

If lasting peace and friendship between Ireland and the British Empire can be had for a mere "verbal concession," then we ask: why are the Irish "impossible" for asking such a thing, and not rather the English for not conceding it? As a matter of fact, it seems to us that "the Impossible English" are a much better explanation of the present deadlock than the "Impossible Irish;" and that it is the English who live in the clouds and in a fairyland of their own making, whilst it is the Irish who are the hard realists.

Why?

The English for a century have treated the Irish as if the Act of Union (to which the Irish were no party of course) had turned them of their free consent into Englishmen—whilst as a matter of fact they have never ceased to protest that they are nothing of the sort and that they had rather die than submit to such "forcible conversion."

Still, these English Idealists have gone on believing that they only have to think the Irish to be English for them to become English: and in the

face of the absence of any common loyalty they have gone on treating them ever since as "traitors," the commonsense reality being that they never were English traitors but are simply Irish patriots.

Again, take the Irish War of the past year. The English once more told each other their fairy tale of a loyal British province terrorized by a "Murder Gang," which was so dastardly as even to tempt the well-nigh superhuman forbearance of the forces of law and order into somewhat regrettable excesses. Yet what happens when a truce is called? The "Murder Gang" disappears into the realm of nursery stories and there comes out clear and clean an Irish Republican Army with its officers, supply columns, intelligence bureau, general staff and a rank and file so perfectly drilled and disciplined, that from the moment an Armistice is signed between the two contending armies, there does not take place one single "outrage," one single collision or even drunkards' "row." So much for the English idealogues' "Murder Gang" and the hard realism of the Irish who have never called their armed forces anything else than what they happened to be in fact,—the Irish Republican Army.

Once more we are to-day confronted by the product of the English fevered brain, which turns the Irish Republic from the cold fact of reality which it is into an amateur dramatic performance, which it decidedly is not. These "Impossible English" find it so difficult to believe that anybody would rather be Irish when he has got the chance of being English, that they stubbornly refuse to acknowledge as a fact what stares everybody else in the face as such.

We ask any but an impractical, mystical English idealist to look at the pictures which have been published in the *Illustrated Weeklies* of the first public meeting of Dail Eireann at the Dublin Mansion House on August 16th; with their speaker, their Cabinet, their rows of members, their press-reporters, their attendants. We ask them to read a report of the proceedings from the moment of opening (with prayer offered up by the Dail's chaplain) to the time when the Strangers' Gallery was cleared for a private session of the Dail. We ask them more particularly to read the solemn oath of allegiance taken by the whole assembly, standing, with uplifted hand, as follows:—

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I do not and shall not yield a voluntary support to any pretended Government, authority, or power within Ireland hostile and inimical thereto, and I do further swear (or affirm) that to the best of my knowledge and ability I will support and defend the Irish Republic and the Government of the Irish Republic, which is Dail Eireann, against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. So help me God.

And we know that to anybody but an Englishman it would be obvious that the Irish Republic is a fact, whether pleasant or unpleasant; a fact that has got to be dealt with, not to be imagined away with a childlike "let's pretend." The people of

Ireland who have elected their representatives to take just that oath of allegiance and nothing else constitute the Irish Republic. It is with this Irish Republic that Mr. George must deal—either by treaty or by force. But nothing is gained by the stupid propaganda attitude of denying its existence.

The Irish President has said already that he represents no republican doctrinaires: the Irish are too realistic for that. If *real* Dominion Status were offered (with the right of secession at any time, such as Canada, Australia &c. possess already,) Mr. deValera seems quite ready to accept so shadowy a bond as a Sovereign common to the British Empire provided such a concession would help to heal the Ulster breach. But, as he says, for a small island of five millions "to give military safeguards and guarantees to the larger island of fifty million inhabitants, and suffer itself to be reduced to the position of a helpless dependency" is not to be offered Dominion Status.

"The co-operation of the British Dominions," he continues, "is free." British statesmen have admitted that. The Dominions could get out if they wanted to. They have not chosen to get out, but we are told we must stay in whether we like it or not; that no matter how our interests are affected we have no means whatever of securing that our interests will be considered."

Before Ireland therefore can join the partnership, the *de facto*—though of course not the *de jure* Irish Republic must necessarily be acknowledged. Then, and only then, a Treaty can be entered into by the two parties, whereby Ireland would freely renounce some of her sovereign rights in order to merge them into a commonwealth of closely allied sister nations. This is cold logic, this is commonsense to the verge of platitude. Yet these "Impossible English" refuse to accept the fact or the logic. They wish to negotiate and yet they have no basis on which to negotiate. They do not want force to be any longer the basis of relationship between the two nations: yet they will not substitute free consent for force. Mr. deValera, as a realist, is ready for either: if it is to be force, let it be force, let the War re-commence. If not, let it be a treaty negotiated on the basis of free consent or even drawn up by an impartial Arbitration Court of Neutrals.

Nothing could be more reasonable, more quietly determined, more realistic. To this cool, recollected and restrained Ireland, England can oppose nothing but exasperation, bad temper and—force. Who of these two, do you think, are really "impossible"?

As for the outcome of it all, one recalls the words of "Æ" in his "Inner and Outer Ireland":

"The political "rebels" I meet to-day are the highest types of Irishmen I have met in my life of 54 years. I think of these young men, so cheerful, so determined, so self-sacrificing, and I grow more and more confident that something great must come out of a race which produces such men in multitude."

HIBERNICUS.

[The latest telegrams give one the hope that neither the English nor the Irish will prove quite impossible.—Ed. S. I.]

THE NEW FACTORIES BILL.*

THE third chapter of the present Factories Act on "Health and Safety" requires a few additions that will ensure more cleanliness and greater sanitary precautions in factories and make factory conditions more congenial to the operatives than at present. A new clause to section 9 of the Act which prohibits the management from making the atmosphere inside the factory so humid as to be injurious to the health of the operatives is a welcome improvement in the right direction. Instances have been recorded where the floors of factories were flooded with toe-deep water in which the operatives had to stand and work for hours and days together in order to produce output of a better quality. The new clause will, it is hoped, check, if not altogether stop, such cruel practices. The provision for keeping a thermometer in every factory is also a necessity. It will lessen the worry and lighten the task of the factory inspector in seeing whether the other provisions of the Act such as ventilation by fans are properly observed. Strangely enough, our Act does not provide against overcrowding in the factories. In extremely congested industrial cities like Bombay, where there is hardly an inch of ground available for further expansion, the factory owners would be tempted to expand their profitable industry by engaging as many new operatives as possible and thrusting them into already over-crowded premises. The English Act provides against such action and prescribes that a fixed number of persons and no more shall be allowed to work in a room of particular dimensions. A new section on these lines should be added to supply the deficiency in the present Act; it will prove to be of practical value in the administration of law. Lime washing of every factory at the end of a definite period is equally essential to maintain cleanliness. The English Act requires every factory owner to lime-wash his factory at the end of every fourteen months. These improvements, though they appear insignificant to the superficial observer, are of the utmost practical importance, especially to those who have to spend almost the whole day in the factories. The present opportunity of amending the Act should not, therefore, be lost by the Indian Legislature in getting these improvements incorporated in the new Act.

The fifth chapter in the present Act regarding "Special Provisions for Textile Factories" has been replaced by a new chapter on "Exceptions" to the general provisions of the Act. The present exceptions are scattered over various sections of the Act and are not exactly based on principles. The present Chapter has brought all the exemptions together, reduced them to a minimum and enunciated definite principles to regulate the grant of exemptions. These principles are generally those adopted by the Washington International Labour Conference. But one misses in the new Bill the safeguards to these principles that are seen in the

* Concluded from the issue of 8th September.

draft conventions of the Washington Conference. For example, any class of work in a factory which is preparatory or complementary or essentially intermittent is rightly given an exemption from the daily and weekly limits of the hours of work on such conditions as may be imposed by the Local Government. But the Washington draft conventions require that "these conditions shall be made only after consultation with the organisations of employers and workers concerned, if any such organisations exist," and that the average number of hours worked per week, over the number of weeks covered by these conditions, shall not exceed forty-eight, i. e. the maximum weekly limit. These two important safeguards must be added to the new section 30. Again, an exemption from the operation of the condition of weekly rest is given to those factories whose work is essentially intermittent, necessitates continuous production and supplies the public with articles of primary necessity, and in which the work cannot be carried on except at stated seasons or is at times dependent on the irregular action of natural forces. But here also, a proviso must be added, as is done by the Washington Conference, to the effect that the loss of a weekly rest day shall be compensated for by the grant of any other rest day, thus providing that an exemption in such cases shall not affect the rest day of the work people. One cannot agree to the provision made in sub-clause (2) of new section 30 that deprives the worker of his midday rest when an exceptional press of work demands continuous working of a factory. However heavy the pressure of work may be, the midday rest must not be dispensed with. It is to be hoped that this provision will not find favour with the central Legislature.

CHILD LABOUR.

I now come to one of the most important items in the Factories Act, viz. the minimum and maximum ages of children and their hours of work. The Bill seeks to increase their minimum age from 9 to 12 and the maximum age from 14 to 15. This is indeed a very great advance over the present conditions, on making which the Government of India deserve to be congratulated. It will be recalled that before the sessions of the Washington Conference, they were vehemently opposed to any increase in the minimum age of children; and their representatives to the Conference carried a mandate to this effect to America. In the sub-committee of the commission of the conference, appointed to consider this question, the Government and the employers' representatives carried the day by deferring the question to the next year's Conference. But in the open Conference which truly and ably reflected all shades of labour opinion, the tables were turned against them and Mr. Joshi succeeded in securing the 12 years' limit. The Government of India, influenced by the strong current of labour opinion outside India, at last seem to have realised the grave defect in the Indian Factories Act in the matter of the

minimum age of children. They, therefore, made up their mind to correct their mistake and accepted the Washington draft convention. Unfortunately, the opposition came from a third and not unexpected quarter, when the draft convention was being ratified in February last. The question then raised was not as to whether the age should be increased or not but whether this increase should stop at 11 or 12. All sorts of arguments were then used, which it is not necessary to repeat here. One remarkable fact that is worth noting is that the Government of India and the employers' representatives were a few months ago dead against any increase being made in the minimum age, but now both have come round, and the former have agreed to this increase and the latter also are prepared to go so far as to increase the age to 11. This fact is in itself the best argument to convince anybody that the change was badly needed.

The increase by a year in the maximum age is commendable. The Bill seeks to equalise the hours of work of children working in both the textile and non-textile factories by lowering them to 6 in the latter factories. But I am of opinion that the hours should be further brought down to 5 in all cases. The importance of such a change is obvious. The six hours period is indeed too long to leave any energy in children for recreation or education. It is often argued that so long as no provision is made for compulsory primary education, it is in the interests of the children themselves to engage them in factories; otherwise they would loiter about in the streets and contract bad habits. But those who hold this view do not raise their little finger for the introduction of compulsory education. Under these circumstances, the advice to delay reduction of the hours of work of children until the advent of compulsory education and to do nothing for the latter's introduction until propitious conditions arise, is nothing but moving in a vicious circle. It is to be hoped that the Legislature will recognise the error in this argument and will not hesitate to reduce the hours to five. Even leaving aside the question of education, the reduction of hours to five is absolutely necessary for the health of children. They must get as much open air and time for recreation as possible; and this cannot be achieved unless their hours are reduced.

EDUCATION OF FACTORY CHILDREN.

Everyone who is interested in the welfare of factory labour will feel keen regret that Government have not yet put forward any definite proposals for the education of factory children. It is now high time to make such a provision. Now that the administration of the Factories Act is a transferred provincial subject, it is for the non-official members of the Local Councils to force their Governments to move in the matter immediately and take necessary steps for the education of factory children. This is one of the most serious defects in the new Bill; and it is feared that the new Act will require to be amended so as to make this provision. The Government of India do not seem to have realised the

necessity of adopting the recommendation of the Factory Commission of 1908 about the creation of the "young persons" class. As long as the child is only 15 years old, it has to work a certain period of hours; but the moment it attains the 16th year, it becomes an adult and as such has to work for double the period. This is too great a jump for a child who has just entered upon his 16th year. It is, therefore, necessary that the "young persons" class between the ages 16 and 18 should be created and it should be worked seven or eight hours per day, so that the child will be accustomed gradually to work more and more without too much strain upon its health; and at the end of three years time it will be able to bear the strain of the adult's work.

Finally, the proposals regarding the hours of work for male adults deserve some consideration. The maximum daily limit of 12 hours must be vehemently condemned as the most retrograde and mischievous provision in the Bill. The workers have already secured a 10 hour day and in industrial centres like Bombay, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, and Cawnpore, it is the rule. One cannot understand why Government have thought it fit to put in such a retrograde clause in the new Bill which is supposed to seek the improvement of the labouring classes. It would induce some mill owners to run their mills only five days in the week at the maximum rate of 12 hours per day, to the great detriment of the work people. The latter will evidently lose by this clause what they have secured by agitation. Government will be well advised not to go back upon what has already been achieved and to bring down the maximum daily limit to at least 10 hours, if not less.

The introduction of the principle of a weekly limit is highly commendable as it finds for the first time a place in our factory legislation. But while we welcome the principle, we should view with disfavour the 60 hours maximum limit. It will be readily admitted to be an improvement upon present conditions, but falls far short of modern requirements. Moreover, the mills at present work generally 60 hours per week. The new statutory limit will not, therefore, be felt or appreciated by the operatives. Continuous work for full five days at the rate of 12 hours per day under the new Bill, or, if our suggestion is accepted, continuous work for six days at the rate of ten hours, is certainly too heavy and unbearable a strain upon the physique of the work people.

R. R. BAKHALE.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, AUGUST 25.

INDIAN STUDENTS' HOSTEL.

I THINK I have already referred to the altogether unmerited attacks that have been made in certain unrepresentative quarters here, for special reasons, upon the Y.M.C.A. Indian Students' Hostel at Heppel Street. Taking advantage of the present high feeling that is running in Indian circles on

matters of national concern and the racial and religious prejudice that is so easy to arouse among the unthinking, charges have been levelled against the institution that it is under the control or influence of the India Office or that it is a centre of Christian propaganda among the Indian students that resort to it. Any well-intentioned person can easily, upon inquiry and examination find out for himself that these allegations are baseless and mischievous; but, of course, those who are determined not to do justice will not be convinced to the contrary either by Lord Lytton's very specific denials or those of the authorities at the Hostel. Still, there is a much larger world than the few misguided bigots and mischief-mongers who are legitimately interested in a unique experiment at the heart of the Empire, and an interview appearing in the "Westminster Gazette" with Dr. S. K. Dutta, who is at present in charge of the institution, throws a bright light upon the objects and aspirations of the Indian National Council of Y.M.C.A.'s in establishing it in London.

"We are anxious," he said, "that this place should become a real Indian centre, with the spirit of study. Back of our minds we have the idea of providing something similar to that which is connected with the European Universities, where, for instance, in Paris, you have the Sorbonne. Secondly, we want a place that will interpret India—a centre of Indian culture, where Indian plays can not only be performed for the delectation of Indian students but for the benefit of the larger public. It was not wholly necessary for us to introduce Tagore to a British public, but here he has met many outside people. In addition, we have given a platform to Indians who have a message to the British public. Thirdly, we feel that at the present time India requires leadership, and we want to give every encouragement to the movement for training men for their responsibilities when they return to India. We are anxious to establish fellowships with a view to provide the opportunity to some of our best Indian students in the Universities of taking subjects that might include, for instance, the study of the London County Council; because such forms of municipal government will make for the highest good of India.

"The problems of the future include the adjustment of racial relationships, and it is very easy to have sentimental ideas about such adjustments, but we feel that we can create a friendly atmosphere between the two races so that such adjustments will be undertaken in a spirit of mutual understanding and sympathy.

"We are perfectly aware that to build a place on the narrow basis of a religion which is in the minority in India will mean that we cannot have behind us the whole of India. As Christians we, too, have a passionate desire to see a united India, and are willing therefore to cooperate with any other Indian bodies in the working of this centre. We have undertaken this job here because no one else was doing it, but our gates are always open to those who have the same ideas, and we look forward to the future in the hope that the basis of our work will be broadened and become nothing short of national. In the time to come we trust that the control of this centre will pass into the hands of a community of Indian scholars, whatever their religion or faith may be."

PREPONDERANCE OF WOMEN.

The census figures for Great Britain just published show a preponderance due to women in the ratio of eleven women to ten men. This is, of course, largely due to the effects of the war, but

in a considerable degree it is but the progress of a tendency clearly seen in previous decades in this country. With a surplus female population of over two millions, the problem is likely, during the next generation, to become acute, and its effects upon social and economic conditions in this country and the Empire generally—at least in the temperate zone—will be far reaching. Wider opportunities for the employment of women in professional and industrial life will partly help in the absorption of this surplus female population, but people are already looking to women themselves to study the problem and help to solve it by a well-considered scheme of emigration to the Dominions, where the sex-proportions are the very opposite to those that exist here.

THE WORLD OUTSIDE.

LISTENERS to the Johnsonian prohibition eloquence, to which India is still being treated, should beware of reading American journals, if they wish to preserve their faith in a millennial America swept clean of vice and crime by the one expedient of "going dry." More particularly would we warn them against an article "Loss and Gain" in the *New Republic* of August 17th, which very judiciously and calmly reviews all the facts of the prohibition case to date. The writer of this article, Mr. R. M. Lovett, first of all observes that :

"In the balance of the losses and gains of prohibition it is undoubtedly a fallacy to treat the country as a social unit. There is more prohibition in the country than in the city—in Kansas than in New York. But the profitable line of division for our discussion proves to be that between the upper and the lower classes. On the whole it is a fair generalization to say that if prohibition has cut the drinking of the poor it has amazingly increased that of the rich."

The fact is that in "dry" U. S. A. it is now-a-days simply considered stingy, to entertain without so plentiful a supply of alcohol that a society lady could inform the writer

"that she considered herself lucky during the past winter if she obtained a partner only half drunk and still in a degree locomotary. Even a children's party must have its bar. Champagne cup and sweetheart cocktails are as much a matter of course as confetti and valentines, and the next morning we hear of the infant whos whos being assisted to their cars by maids and chauffeurs. Again it may be inferred that whether or-not the old are drinking too little, the young are drinking too much."

There is a spice of adventure in getting the forbidden: hence the young and the adventurous are all for it. It once was a mark of character to refuse drinks: now it is one, to get them. Mr. Lovett quotes a distinguished entertainer as declaring that in her experience the voluntary teetotaler is as extinct as the dodo.

THE raising of the moral standard by Act of Parliament seems after all not to have proved quite the success that Mr. Johnson would make us believe. But where does all this liquor come from? *The Manchester Guardian* of August 19th has an interesting description of the traffic that goes on

day and night along the thousands and thousands of miles of land frontier and seaboard. Obviously it is altogether impracticable to guard every yard of these lines; equally obviously it must pay handsomely to run motor truckloads of liquor from Canada into the States or run motor launches laden with spirits from steamers anchored outside the three-mile territorial limit into American creeks and rivers, discharging along the enormous stretches of sea-coast and riverboard. Regular "Mystery Ships" are used in this trade, mostly from a centre in the Bahamas, and all the ingenuity of war-time blockade running is now employed, with that great difference that whilst the receivers of contraband had then the whole population against them, they now receive their good humour-ed countenance, if not even their active co-operation. As a special ironical touch it appears that the dismissed excise officials of the ci-devant Wilson régime are now putting their expert knowledge of the ways and methods of the Excise Department at the service of these wholesale smugglers, whose profits must run into pretty staggering figures.

If the facts are really as described—and the evidence is all to that effect—we cannot help wondering how Mr. Johnson can be ignorant of it all. For, obviously, we cannot believe that he would come to India and tell us "child-races" fairy tales of millennial jail-closing, if he did not believe in them himself. To him and to all real well-wishers of national sobriety we suggest "to cut the sob-stuff right out", as our American friends say, and to believe that Prohibition itself is best advocated—soberly.

Novy Put, a well-informed Riga newspaper which is much drawn upon by people who wish to find out the truth about Russia, is quoted by the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* as saying

"that with a mass of hungry people on one side and people who want to feed them on the other, there should be no special need for elaborate discussions."

If nothing else was intended, there would not, indeed. But the *New York Evening Post* of August 1st, naively gives away the show by waxing eloquent about the ulterior purpose to which the new "All Russian Non-Partizan Relief Committees" with their wide powers would lend themselves. "Such Committees", hopes the *Post*,

"will be dealing with the real crisis in Russia, and will tend to become the organising centre of economic forces. If it is successful it will secure wide prestige and support. Such an agency, with its contacts throughout the country might naturally become the nucleus for a new national assembly through which could be worked out the organisation of a Government really representative of all elements in the Russian nation."

Which lets the cat out of the bag pretty nicely, thank you. Against these counter-revolutionary dreamers who will not learn from however many a counter-revolutionary failure, we would quote the opinion of two Russians, neither of whom is a member of the Communist Party.

The one is Maxim Gorki, whom the Paris *Humanité* of August 14th quotes as saying that

"the future government of Russia is the Soviet regime. No other can be imagined. It corresponds to the democratic feeling of the Russians; it guarantees possession of the land to our hundred million peasants. Any attack against it will unite them, as they have been united by every danger from abroad during the last three years."

The other is M. J. Olgin, who contributes a series of most illuminating articles to the *New Republic* and who in the issue of August 17th writes as follows:

"It is well to remember, that famine has not been unknown in Russia these last thirty years and that the endurance of the Russian masses is beyond Western comprehension. The Soviet organization, with its quick and decisive method of action, may turn out more capable of facing such a crisis than any other administration. It may be assumed with a degree of certainty that even the present famine will not disrupt the social fabric of new Russia."

IN our issue of September 1st we gave a résumé of the present position of the Building Guild movement in England. As we then pointed out, it is in these guilds that we should probably recognize the heralds and earnest of a new economic order, based on industrial liberty, the self-determination of the individual worker and production for service. We were therefore not a little interested to find that since then another industry has been quietly and unobtrusively attacked. We read in the *Manchester Guardian* of August 19th that there has been started in that city a Furniture and Furnishing guild which in time is confident of growing into a national organization. The report of the promoters believes that

"the guild will be able to give a cheaper and better article than the capitalist. It will set itself the task of showing all and sundry that it is possible to work industry on a no-profit basis; that labour must be the first charge on industry, and that this is as practical and scientific as the present condition of things is sordid in the extreme."

The Building Guilds, it will be remembered, also originated in Manchester and it looks decidedly as if the economic system which Manchester inaugurates to-day will to-morrow be the economic system of all England! We certainly sincerely hope so—and the sooner, the better. For the present system is really breaking up on all sides. Unemployment is rising higher and higher—and with things as at present, the outlook for the coming winter in England is simply appalling.

To people who had looked to the end of all the strikes as the beginning of industrial peace, the recent cables on the side of unemployment in England must have come as a very disagreeable surprise. It is of course more comforting for the well-to-do to persuade himself that unrest is merely the result of those plaguey fellows, the agitators and "Communists", than that it is the symptom of a society in transition. To them and to all we would heartily recommend the close study of the "Final Report on the Cost of Living" recently published by Allen and Unwin. Whilst in Victorian times Western so-

ciety was actually based on the principle of competition, it is so no longer, as this Report amply illustrates. Where the competitive system of industry to-day survives, it is only allowed to do so within so discreetly regulated limits, that the consumer is so no longer protected by the competition of rival producers. Since 1914 the capitalist concentration of power has gone on so steadily that the individual small or middle-sized employer has now-a-days no more control over policy, than if he were the salaried employee of his Trust. All producers have combined making common cause against the consumer, who is bled to the uttermost farthing. Large production may pay; small production at an enhanced price may pay better. The old idea was that the consumer's interest was protected by the competition of the rival producers. But they have long ceased to be rivals. Production is only one means to the end, restriction of output is another and perhaps even a more effective one. Hence the combination of producers for the ruthless exploitation of the consumer. Hence growing unemployment. Never was the mask more effectively pulled from the essentially anti-social nature of capitalism. Capitalism has only one end in view—and that is individual profits. If production pays, it will produce; if competition pays, it will compete. But neither producing for the consumer nor service to the Commonwealth is ever more than a means.

IN one country alone, Great Britain, where the Excess Profits Duty has enabled the investigator to get some sort of statistics about the tribute levied by capitalism on a grateful country, the big-producers, thus centralized and joined together in a few groups of super-capitalists, have during the five years 1916-1921, been able to fleece the consumer to the staggering tune of £2250 millions more than they did in pre-war days. The recently tabulated income-tax returns of the U. S. A. tell a similar tale. They inform us that, for the year 1919, 65 persons paid taxes on incomes of a million dollars or over, and that the sum total of their incomes was \$ 152,650,245. These 65 were the nucleus of a little circle of 5,526 Americans whose total income was a billion dollars a year at least, and probably more. England and the U. S. A. are of course the two countries where property is less evenly distributed than anywhere else in the world to-day. But everywhere in Europe is found the same tendency, aggravated by the financial bankruptcy into which one country after another is sliding. And profoundly disquieting it all is—not for them only, but for all the world.

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