

# BRITISH BLUNDERING AND SINN FEIN MALICE IN IRELAND: LEADERS OF SECRET ...

By CHARLES H. GRASTY. Special Correspondence of THE NEW YORK TIMES.

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## BRITISH BLUNDERING AND SINN FEIN MALICE IN IRELAND

### Leaders of Secret Organizations Believe Movement on Eve of Climax—Labor Leaders of Bolshevist Leanings—Church and Land Hunger as Factors—Effect of American Influence

By CHARLES H. GRASTY.

Special Correspondence of THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Dublin, Aug. 3, 1920.

IF there is British tyranny in Ireland, Ulster has not found it out. Both the laws and the administration are the same in all four of the Irish provinces. The main point in the Irish case, so far as I can make it out, is that the Government is alien and is unwilling or unable to understand the people that it undertakes to rule. Britain is a generally lenient stepmother—but a stepmother. Ulster, while under the same administration, has not the same ground of complaint that the rest of Ireland has on the score of race, temperament and religion.

While I would not charge that the Catholic Church as such was in any way responsible for agitation and rebellion, I think it is perfectly clear that the training of the Church and the resulting devotion of its members tend to form a character in Ireland that lends itself to such movements as that of Sinn Fein. The people, this is the tenor of the evidence, are lacking in breadth and independence. Much of the resentment grows out of the fact that Catholic Ireland is ruled by a Protestant power; and the temperament of the Irish makes them peculiarly liable to any influence of this kind. They are romantic, imaginative, sensitive. They have endured much privation over a long period of time; they have seen outsiders come in, possess themselves of their land and excel them in all the ordinary competitions of life.

Of course, if one goes back far enough, this latter may be said of England and all other countries which were invaded and appropriated by conquerors. But in most other countries conqueror and conquered have gone through a process of amalgamation, and usually with beneficial results to both sides. There was no amalgamation in America, and the Indian perished. It is the countries where there were no such mixtures of race that have dry-rotted and declined, but in Ireland, even where there has been race-mixture, as between the Cromwell Yorkshiremen and the natives in certain parts of the West, producing a very fine physical type, there has been no general fusion leading to modified and improved habits of thought—mainly, perhaps, because of the devotion of the Catholic population to the Church.

Cherishes Ancient Grudges.

The Irish who are now concerned in the effort for independence have remained true to type throughout the centuries. They live in the past and much of their hatred of England rests upon injuries inflicted hundreds of years ago. I was told that they preserve land records dating to and back of the Cromwell invasion, and the descendants of the clans from whom property was then taken regard themselves as the lawful possessors of that land today. Every wrong committed by England in the last thousand years is remembered and documented. No account is taken of wrongs on the other side, such, for example, as the slaughter by the Irish clans of 150,000 men, women and children in Ulster in 1641. Nor are there any entries on the credit side of the ledger for the great concessions that have been made by England.

Ireland has stood apart from its rulers and Britain has allowed things to drift without undertaking to accomplish, by peaceful penetration and by the establishment of mutual acquaintance and understanding, a permanent, livable relationship. The Irish people, with their romantic outlook on life, have never been assisted in the development of modern and businesslike capacities and habits. One of the greatest outrages ever inflicted upon Ireland was the legislation in another century by which the woolen industry, which formed the basis of Irish industry and prosperity, was deliberately destroyed in the interests of English sheep-raising and woolen manufacture. When this terrific blow was struck at Ireland the better trained, more thrifty and more resourceful Scotch who had been planted in Ulster met the situation by substituting flax-raising, linen manufacture, and, later, shipbuilding. The Irish found no means of opening up new lines of industry and suffered famine and ruin.

Partisans on both sides will assign reasons and reach conclusions in accordance with their partisanship. The Irish genuinely and deeply believe that they have been persecuted and tyrannized over by the British. The British will say that the ills of the Irish are those which have come to every other country at one or other stage of its history and that the bottom reason for the distressing conditions is the incapacity and perversity of the Irish themselves. But the British have certainly given the Irish an ostensible reason and good talking points for resorting to rebellious methods by doing nothing to improve conditions except under stress of rebellion.

British Blunderings.

This historical method has applied to recent events. The British activities in Ireland have justified the claim by the Irish that nothing can be expected of Britain except at the pistol point. The more lawless and violent the measures taken the greater will be the concession. In every emergency there seems to be on the part of Britain an utter misunderstanding of Irish human nature. From Easter, 1916, on the British have blundered from one policy into another. Its methods could not have been better calculated to supply precisely what the cool and resolute leaders of this particular Irish movement needed to arouse the popular passions, without which such a movement could not hope to succeed.

In 1916 Ireland had enjoyed a long period under Augustine Birrell (the distinguished literary man) of lenient administration. It was his avowed policy to kill with kindness the Irish antagonism to Britain, but when the Easter rebellion necessarily put an end to the Birrell régime British policy was suddenly reversed. Britain was busy with the great war, and in her handling of the Dublin situation it was al-

most as if she were extending a hand into Ireland and shooting right and left while her eyes were turned away in another direction. As the movement went forward Britain seemed to vacillate from time to time between gentleness and pacification and shooting back with a bad aim.

During the periods of militant policy the Defense of the Realm act was brought into play—always with bad effect. Irish fairs were broken up, cattle sales and markets were prevented and even a sale of women's work at the Lord Mayor's was interfered with. The Freeman's Journal was suppressed, tanks were driven and soldiers in full uniform, helmeted and carrying rifles, marched through the streets in the hope of intimidating the population. Indiscriminate arrests were made, and men were put in prison or shot who were perhaps at heart moderates, and who in that case could have been of the greatest assistance in bringing matters to a settlement if they had been recognized and dealt with intelligently.

It is impossible superficially to reconcile British methods in Ireland with the steady and phlegmatic character of the

British people. It was decided about May 1 to stop the raids and mitigate D. O. R. A. (as the Defense of the Realm act is commonly called), thus giving the Irish of the south and west a chance to make good their claim that Irish outlawry was simply a reprisal for British violence. Since May 14 this new policy has been carried out. The understanding was that if Sinn Fein conducted its campaign peacefully there would not be a resumption of the old methods. If, on the other hand, Sinn Fein violence was kept up, the military would be sent to Ireland, and future proceedings would be on the basis of a suppression of civil war.

It must be confessed that the new leniency was followed by increased Sinn Fein violence. By June 1 it was clear that Britain would be driven to military measures. At that time the British military forces included about 40,000 soldiers, 10,000 constabulary, 1,300 metropolitan police in Dublin and 1,100 in Belfast. The Irish Volunteers were said to number 440,000—half of whom were fairly well-seasoned men and the rest immatures. These forces were of course poorly provisioned and muni-

tioned for anything like real war. It was generally recognized in Dublin that it would not be safe for Sinn Fein to embark on open war, and that it would do better to keep along the lines of murder and terrorism surrounded by absolute secrecy.

After talking with as many people on both sides as I was able to see, and getting the opinion of the few neutrals whom it was possible to find in Ireland, I came to the conclusion that the minimum that Sinn Fein would accept was full dominion home rule like Canada, omitting the Governor General and including control of excise, customs and police. They will not consent to leaving Ulster out. That is the situation at this time. Of course, if some adversity should overtake the movement for independent Ireland, and especially if there should be a split with the labor union, the demand might be modified; or if, on the other hand, British helplessness continued and the Presidential campaign in America crystallized American sympathy, Sinn Fein might decide to go the whole hog.

Many observers in Dublin have believed that the shrewd and practical

leaders of Sinn Fein, in spite of their protestations that they would take no compromise, have realized right along that for this time the goal of a republic could not be reached and that they have had in their minds the alternative of creating a strong trading position. On the other side, it has been suspected that the British Government was manoeuvring to the same end. The Home Rule bill would be passed with the knowledge that it would not be acceptable, but that it would be carried into effect—partially, at least—and in the meantime negotiations would proceed for a settlement less onerous to Sinn Fein. The whole situation depends upon the various factors heretofore mentioned, and will be altered as it shall appear to what extent America is behind Ireland, how military intervention in Ireland fares, a split or continued solidarity between Sinn Fein and its labor ally, the establishment or failure to establish a strong, unified public opinion in England, and the success or failure of Lloyd George in his handling of war questions affecting Germany, Russia, France, Italy, Asia Minor and India.

It may be set down as unalterable that Britain will not accept, under any circumstances, Irish independence. The British say that the delivery of Ireland into the hands of either Sinn Fein or Irish Bolshevism would not only destroy the integrity of the empire, but would be unjust to the countries which won the war with Germany. They ask you what would have happened if there had been an Irish republic in existence in 1914; and they say that in case of any similar trouble Ireland (which is the key to the Atlantic) would be surrendered, as it would have been in 1914, to the enemies of law and liberty—whether those enemies were Germans, Russians or (in the extreme case) Japanese. They are willing to give the people of Ireland a chance to rule themselves in domestic matters and develop the capacity for government not now possessed by the Irish race.

In Sinn Fein there are two parties, or main divisions on moral lines, the differences between which are concealed in the present state of excitement; one party is for efficiency and the other is for spoils. Whether in America or in Ireland the Irishman is a politician. The

saloon figures in politics here as it did in America. There is a strong feeling among the better class of Sinn Fein against graft, and, except in abnormal conditions, there would be a dread, not confined to Protestants, of the possibilities of a rampant political system that might be more injurious and intolerable than alien rule.

Irish Mass Psychology.

The recent sweep of Ireland by the Sinn Fein in local elections is not indicative so much of a change of heart as it is of the potency in Ireland of the instinct to "follow the crowd." So great has been the success of Sinn Fein, so stupid the British resistance, that the movement has never had a serious setback and people have been carried along by the tide. In Ireland there has been absolutely no other leadership than Sinn Fein, and it has been its aim to make the mental servitude so overwhelming that no other leadership would or could offer itself.

Between April 1 and June 1 Sinn Fein swept everything before it. But Sinn Fein has been playing a dangerous game. It has been possible in Ireland itself to paralyze moral forces. The

tremendous potency of usage and custom has been demonstrated by the supineness with which violence has been accepted as the prevailing order. There is no indignation, no audible protest; while one reason for it was the fear of the individual as to what might happen to him, another reason was that the common level of moral sense has been lowered everywhere. At the same time, among the many Sinn Feiners that I met, I have found but few who were not ashamed of the methods, though all made a general excuse on the ground that murders and outrages were necessary for reasons of patriotism and because there was no other way to attract the attention of and compel action by the phlegmatic but brutal tyrant who ruled over Ireland.

I said to many Sinn Feiners whom I met: "If you have a just cause, the time is propitious for you to present it nobly and with dignity to the world. If you want independence, if you can maintain continuity of effort to that end, if you can convince your friends and those who are neutral of your capacity for sane and just government, you can get it in such measure as you deserve it. But in America, at least, I can say that while you may have the support of some of your nationals in any methods you may adopt, you can never get whole-hearted and sincere sympathy of the mass of Americans so long as you are shooting people in the back. On the contrary, things like that are an argument against you and in favor of British rule, because they raise doubts as to whether you are qualified to conduct a government and will keep step in the progress of the world."

An argument of this kind is usually received silently. One prominent Sinn Feiner, when I put it up to him like this, replied in a low tone, "You must remember that Sinn Fein has troubles of its own," and that is a fact. But the admission rather invalidates one of the Sinn Fein arguments against British rule, which is that its incompetency is proved by its inability to control the situation and hence present conditions in Ireland.

Sinn Fein Organization.

The Sinn Fein organization precisely parallels the scheme of holding companies formerly so much in vogue in America. I would diagram it in this way:

First, there is the inner circle, composed of, say, twelve men—it may be more and it may be considerably less. This circle makes and orders carried out the main decisions.

It, in turn, holds and controls, in thought at least, a sufficient body of the Irish Republican Brotherhood to give it control of that body.

The Irish Brotherhood in turn controls in the same way the great Sinn Fein organization. Its block in Sinn Fein may be less than 51 per cent., but it is a practical control.

Sinn Fein holds through a working arrangement the leadership of the labor organization. If this great organization were subjected to careful mathematical analysis it would probably appear that these various controls were exercised by surveillance, as was the case with the holding companies in America. In the meantime, as the movement has progressed and as the Sinn Fein offensive has shown itself much more wary as well as much bolder than the British defensive, Sinn Fein has steadily grown and has succeeded in throwing over the whole of Ireland a condition of mental servitude which has prevented about the rise of opposing forces. Macerlinck's expression "spirit of the hive" gives an idea of the present state of thought and feeling.

Cohesion by Force.

The "spirit of the hive" in Ireland is to go along with Sinn Fein. It is a kind of ground swell. But it is a cohesion of force and not a true moral cohesion. Sinn Fein has brought this condition about by methods which must be stated in and made efficient. It is a matter of sustained flight. The very first moment that there are any signs of slowing down the processes of disintegration will begin in Ireland. The Irish are used to being led and under emotional excitement will fall into line and go at full speed. The extraordinary terrorism which has been brought about has entirely paralyzed the kind of reaction to violence that usually acts as a check in every community. The present condition cannot be maintained in the face of any kind of reverse.

The present mental and moral state of Ireland is well illustrated by the Coroner's inquest and verdict in the case of John Breen, who was shot by the police in May. Breen was a member of a raiding party that was following and firing upon a body of police inferior in number. Finally one of the policemen turned and shot and killed Breen. It was established that Breen, when killed, had in his hand a revolver with all the chambers empty. This was the verdict of the Sinn Fein Coroner's inquest: "We find that John Breen died from shock and hemorrhage caused by a bullet wound inflicted by Constable Martin while John Breen was fighting for the freedom of his country."

Here is presented the inside of the Sinn Fein mind. Once this position is taken, murder is no longer crime.

Patriotism Excuses Crime.

Ireland has been put in a mental and moral state where there is no expressed protest against these things which in normal conditions would revolt every community. Violence and crime have become the established order and have reduced Ireland, temporarily, to a state of moral inertia. Such crime cannot be committed as part of a government system without arousing antagonism and distrust in communities not under the immediate influence and hypnotism of the system. Many Sinn Feiners feared the effect on the outside world and the conclusion of an impartial observer is irresistible. It is the British and not the Irish who will ultimately be helped

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# BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND SINN FEIN

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by crime, and in turn it is the Irish who will be helped by violence and general blundering on the part of the British.

## Personnel of Sinn Fein.

The methods of Sinn Fein in its campaign and its personnel, so far as that personnel is visible, present a violent and interesting contrast.

Erskine Childers, who is one of the foremost men on the intellectual side in Sinn Fein, is a graduate of Oxford and a Protestant. He was brought up by his relations in Waterford, the Barton family. One of the members of this family is R. C. Barton, also a Protestant, who is now serving a sentence of three years in a British prison. Childers is an Englishman with an Irish mother. The Bartons are a fine old county family. R. C. Barton served in the British Air Force during the war. The charge against Barton is inciting rebellion. He is a literary man and his book, "The Riddle of the Sands," a story of German spies, is well known.

Mrs. Childers, like Mrs. Smith-Gordon, is an American. She was a Miss Osgood. She is active in Sinn Fein matters and is credited with considerable intellectual influence.

Smith-Gordon, the head of the Land Bank (Sinn Fein), is a Scotch Ulsterman and a graduate of Eton and Oxford. He was a professor in Canada and married the daughter of Senator Fletcher of Florida. He is a Protestant, and while a sincere Sinn Feiner is a man of moderate views. His management of the Sinn Fein Bank apparently has been excellent and has kept going the Plunkett Plan of Land Distribution, which the Congested Districts Commission has been unable to carry out recently on account of financial conditions. The money for the Land Bank has come from America.

Arthur Griffith, the Acting President of the Republic, is also a Protestant. But it would be misleading to infer that the Protestants constitute a large element in Sinn Fein; probably they are under one per cent. of the whole. The only other Protestant among the heads in the movement, so far as I can recall, is Mrs. Green, the well-known authoress, who is one of the leaders.

## Pictureque Leaders.

Rev. Michael O'Flanagan, Vice President of Sinn Fein, is a handsome, eloquent and fiery young priest. He has spent eight years in America and has many friends there. He is one of the priests who would give up the Church rather than the Republican movement, and it has been necessary for his Bishop now and again to discipline him. His motto is: "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." He is pro-German and doesn't care who knows it.

The Countess Markiewicz, who is a member of the Irish Cabinet, belongs by birth to the Gore-Booths, a well-known aristocratic family, but she married a foreigner and lived for some years in the Latin Quarter in Paris. She is a picturesque character, but in spite of her high official position others take her less seriously than she takes herself. She has a "salon," where many of the leaders meet.

George Russell, born an Ulsterman and a big bewhiskered kindly fellow, was referred to by Sir Horace Plunkett in a conversation with me as the first mind in Ireland. He has had a very large share in Plunkett's great work. Russell thinks on entirely philosophic lines, and in my talk with him it was impossible for me to think of him as having anything to do with the campaign of murder. He wouldn't himself kill a fly.

Professor John MacNeill, who occupies the Chair of History in the Catholic University, is another intellectual, but he was the leader of the Irish Volunteers in 1918. He kept in the background in the Easter revolution, and is understood to have refused to issue the order for the rebellion at the last moment. His brother, James MacNeill, is credited with greater practical abilities, and many people tell you that this MacNeill is one of the real inside leaders. He was formerly an Indian civil servant and knows the fighting game. He enjoys the respect of all classes.

## Elements of Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein's control is absolute at present outside of the Ulster "pale." Nominally it has drawn into its ranks considerably more than half of the population outside of the Ulster "pale." It must not be concluded, however, that this entire membership is in sympathy with the whole Sinn Fein movement, and I believe that a very large majority are opposed to the extreme violence which has been the policy of the management for purposes of terrorism. Of course it is very difficult to ascertain with any degree of accuracy the true inwardness of a movement about which secrecy is enforced as a life and death matter. While at the heart of the Sinn Fein movement lies the burning zeal for Irish independence, many of the members hold moderate views.

Not all of the crimes, by any means, are authorized by the Sinn Fein. The loosing of lawlessness inevitably brings about an orgy of crime. It must be borne in mind that the Sinn Fein was a full-fledged organization which was seized upon by the heads of the present movement as a convenient mechanism through which to carry out its program. This organization, I understand, was originally literary in its aims, and had for its special mission the revival of the Irish tongue. Then it took up the work of industrial development along purely Irish lines. There was a very strong anti-clerical element in it at one time. I was told that the anti-clerical tendencies were countered by introduction into the membership of Catholic priests, who labored steadily to turn Sinn Fein activities into other directions.

In Sinn Fein and within the sphere of its influence there are four distinct and separate elements which hold great power in Ireland. First, there are the Catholic hierarchy and priests. The power of this body is well known, and while there are some young priests like Father Michael O'Flanagan who could not be controlled by the Church to surrender the aim of Irish independence, the Church as a whole tries to hold itself apart.

## Labor and Sinn Fein.

Second in importance to the hierarchy and priests in its relation to Sinn Fein is the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The adhesion of this large body, composing, with the families of the men, nearly one-fourth of the population of Ireland, is necessary to Sinn Fein domination. But labor in Ireland is even less affected with Sinn Fein sympathies than the hierarchy and priests. It has been carried by the success of the movement and is willing to go along with it until a crossroads is reached where labor plans to lead in

a different direction. Sinn Fein rests upon patriotic ardor. The vision of an Irish republic is, the thing that stirs the Sinn Fein heart and gives the movement solidarity. Organized labor is looking ahead to Soviet government. Its movement is neither religious, racial nor sectional, and when the time comes it counts on tremendous support from labor in Ulster. Labor reckons that the realization of republicanism in Ireland will be more favorable for Bolshevism than would British rule. The Transport Union is therefore an independent and perhaps only a temporary ally of Sinn Fein.

There is still a third body and one not inconsiderable. This is composed of followers of Sinn Fein who had been picked up on the wave of enthusiasm produced by success. Such adherence lacks conviction and sincerity and cannot be counted on in difficulties.

A fourth element temporarily absorbed by Sinn Fein is composed of Nationalists. This party, so long represented in Parliament and possessing such great influence in legislation, has momentarily disappeared in Ireland, but the principles for which it stood still exist, and upon favorable opportunity will again assert themselves. Most business men and small landowners are said to be still Nationalists at heart and believe in a solution along the lines of a dominion.

With all these separate elements Sinn Fein has been able until now to maintain the appearance of unity. The leaders are too sagacious not to recognize the dangers arising from forces of disintegration within their ranks. The best observers that I could find in Ireland believe that the purpose of Sinn Fein was to bring the effort for Irish independence to a climax within the next few months. The leaders had been trying to maintain and increase their strength in the hope that matters may reach a culminating point while the various conditions that favor them still exist.

## America's Influence.

I should reckon the most important of these conditions as the present sympathetic attitude of America. I have seen figures estimating the Irish-American element as high as 14,000,000, but a reliable statistician has given an Ulster leader an estimate of 4,000,000. The Irish leaders consider that the influence of the Irish-American voters, plus that of a considerable portion of the German-American, will be tremendously helpful to them. They also count on the considerable anti-British sentiment in America. They even hope that a quarrel and perhaps a war between America and Britain can be fomented. They are receiving and will probably continue to receive substantial financial aid from the United States. Many people believe that they are drawing on American talent for a part of the management of their movement, which has been so practical and successful.

Another calculation is that the demand for Irish independence is addressed to the jury of world opinion with peculiar force at a time when the principle of self-determination figures so conspicuously. The Irish movement is pro-German in the sense that it is anti-British, but I do not believe with Sir Edward Carson that Sinn Fein is receiving any really valuable help from a country that is so divided and distracted that it is incapable of helping itself.

Of course the leaders count on the shakiness and the internal difficulties of the present British Government, as they count on the manifold difficulties which beset the British Empire itself.

There has undoubtedly been the hope in Ireland that British labor could be entangled with the Irish labor organization. The fall of the Lloyd George Government has been ardently desired and a labor succession hoped for; it has been believed that these events in British politics would create a liquid situation in which there would be a greater chance of realizing a revolutionary plan.

If all of these possibilities could become actualities the dream of an Irish republic might indeed come true, but it is asking a good deal of efficient management to join hands with such great luck.

## Sinn Fein Ambitions.

In the absence of de Valera, who is said to be acting as President without authority because not actually holding that office under the Constitution of the republican brotherhood, Arthur Griffith is acting in his place. Not only is the Parliament functioning and the Cabinet attending to business, but there are emissaries to foreign countries. Financiers are taken care of by the land bank, and Sir Horace Plunkett's scheme of co-operative farming is still being carried out, although the good influence of Plunkett himself has greatly declined. There are schemes for the regulation of inland trade that have reached an advanced theoretical stage. Other projects concern railroads, canals and rivers, and the developing of coal and iron and other minerals which abound in the island. There are full-fledged schemes for improvement in labor conditions and arbitration. The "invisible republic" set up in December, 1918, was followed by a ratification of a formal declaration of independence. The heads of the movement profess to regard the Irish Republic as fait accompli. Its supporters are oath bound not to accept any offer of dominion home rule. Nothing short of independence will do. They say that Ireland's accepting an offer of dominion status would be as absurd as Holland accepting a similar offer from Germany.

Sinn Fein policy, as explained to me by those in a position to know, is:

- (1) To create a self-supporting nation.
- (2) To secure the recognition of that nation by the world.
- (3) To establish permanent order and prosperity by emancipation from alien rule.

Separation is the keystone in the arch of Sinn Fein policy.

Clubs have been organized all over the country—they are said to number thousands—to effectuate these Dall Eireann policies. All this effort is in a water-tight compartment entirely apart from that of carrying out the program of violence. This latter is organized under a different management, and economic and industrial activities were not corrupted by the business of murder, and the business of murder is not weakened by any touch with the economic and industrial activities. If one can overlook the shootings in the back, and the general lawlessness, he cannot help admire the thoroughness and efficiency with which Sinn Fein has organized and carried out its movement. While the work has been going on hundreds of those who were engaged in it have been arrested as criminals, which makes the results accomplished all the more remarkable.

I went to see Acting President Griffith of the invisible republic, and found him in a modest office piled high with books and pamphlets and much in need of the attention of a janitor. He has no attendants and no anteroom, and his visitors were sitting round waiting for a chance to talk to him. He is the plainest little man that one could imagine. He dresses in shabby clothes, and when he speaks seems to have difficulty in expressing himself. This is a difficulty that he does not have when he works as a pamphleteer. That is the work that mainly brought him into prominence in the Irish movement. There are some people in Dublin who will tell you that Arthur Griffith is the real brains of the republican movement, but others are just as sure that it is Professor John McNeill or some other man. I was not able to interview Mr. Griffith on account of the pressure of his engagements, but I obtained from other sources a summary of his views on present conditions.

Mr. Griffith regards the present Home Rule bill as sectarian. Under it a minority of one quarter—Ulster—will have a veto over the rest. The bill is an absolute negation of the Gladstone bill of 1885 and the Home Rule bill passed by the House of Commons in 1893 and vetoed by the House of Lords, and a partial negation of the bill of 1914. Under the bills of 1885 and 1893 Ireland remained a unit, and the proposed Irish Government was allowed to collect and control all Irish taxation except customs. In March, 1914, the Government appointed a Committee on Irish Finance. There were five English members, and Ireland was represented by Lord Pirrie, the great Belfast shipbuilder, and Dr. Kelly, the Bishop of Ross, the foremost moderate in the hierarchy. This committee reported unanimously, first, that the Irish Government should have control of Irish customs and excises; second, that it should impose, collect and pay into its own Treasury all Irish taxation.

But the Government kept in the bill of 1914 British control of Irish customs and excise but provided that Irish taxation be collected by officials appointed from and responsible to Ireland. The apportionment of money was to be decided by a Joint Exchequer Board, two members appointed by the Irish Government, two by the English, and the Chairman "nominated by the King," thus giving control to the British Government. The excuse was that Irish revenue was less than expenditure.

## British Hold Revenues.

This was a false claim in Mr. Griffith's opinion. If for three successive years the revenue exceeded the expenditure, the bill was to be revised in the direction of increase of the authority of the Irish Government. The present bill gives Ireland still less, though the revenue admittedly now greatly exceeds the expense. The British Government is simply holding Irish revenue as a security against Irish commercial enterprise. The bill withholds the power of law-making respecting the Crown, war, the army, the navy, treason, alienage and naturalization. There can be no territorial troops; it is forbidden to exercise authority over any military force, to make treaties or maintain Consular Service. Ireland cannot enact legislation respecting external trade, nor can it control the police. The bill in Mr. Griffith's opinion is a whittling down of the 1914 measure plus the partition of Ireland and the re-erection of Orange ascendancy. A council on one side representing less than one million people has equal power with a council on the other side representing more than three millions, thus giving the Ulster minority the right of veto. This injustice is rendered more intolerable by the fact that in Ulster there are 700,000 Catholics to 880,000 Protestants, of which latter 15 per cent. are Nationalists.

Statistics in Ireland are often hard to get, but in 1912 the total acreage was about 19,000,000, of which 12,500,000 were in pasture. Of the remaining one-third about 12 per cent. was in hay, 5 per cent. in oats and 10 per cent. in other crops. The rest was marsh, bog, woods and barren mountains.

## Land Hunger in Ireland.

Since the repeal of the corn laws of the last century Ireland has gradually changed from agricultural to pastoral. In no other country under an ordered democratic rule would it have been possible to handle large landowners with such ruthlessness. But Ireland's plight had been agitated with such persistency and general conditions in that country were so unhappy that the British Government finally chose the alternative of formal and legal injustice to the large landowner in order to get a distribution that the poorer classes, either through lack of thrift or through unjust and unwise laws, had been unable to procure for themselves.

The extent to which conditions were changed under the act of 1803 is shown by the fact that in the Province of Connaught 55 per cent. of the area is in small farms. The Congested District Commission is still purchasing land when owners show any disposition to sell. At this one point at least there is co-operation between British officials and Sinn Fein, for the bank of this organization, under the Presidency of Smith Gordon, is furnishing funds that would not otherwise be obtainable at moderate interest rates. As I have mentioned before, I understand that this money comes largely from America. It is advanced through small purchasers who make nominal cash payment and give long-time mortgages for deferred payments.

While this lawful and orderly process is going on Sinn Fein is permitting another form of distributing land for which only the sanction of their own courts is necessary. Irish youths who stayed at home during the war go in bodies from fifty to three hundred, frequently taking coffins as a persuasive influence, and notify a landowner that he will be expected to sell them portions of his property. In the typical case the owner sends for help and the aggressions temporarily stop. But unless the owner gets protection of some kind he is likely to furnish a subject for a Coroner's inquest, the verdict of which usually is that the victim came to his death at the hands of "persons unknown." This has resulted, as it was intended to result, in a general selling movement among large landowners. Prices are usually fixed by a Sinn Fein tribunal and the figures are extremely moderate. If the owner attempts to sell at public auction there are no bidders. Many of these large landowners do not deserve much sympathy, for the land has been held for centuries in the same families, who have done nothing to improve conditions.

One of the reasons why it is easy to stir up agitation in Ireland is that the rural laboring classes are not fully employed and have time to talk politics.

Allen and tyrannical rule is the constant topic of conversation. The oppressions of the conquering race are discussed and brooded over. In this sense the Irish have the instinct of freedom.

## Influence of the Church.

Circumstances have identified the Church with the agitating element in Ireland, but after all the Church is fundamentally conservative. Labor is deeply Bolshevist in Ireland, and when the time comes that it must appear in its true character and disclose its real aims, there will be a new cleavage that will cut across the Sinn Fein. In Sir Horace Plunkett's co-operative bodies Ulsterites and Catholics sit side by side in harmony. Similarly, if the issue is raised between the property holding classes and labor, Leinster, Connaught and Munster will divide on approximately the same lines as Ulster.

I heard a good deal of vague but significant talk in Belfast that bore out what I had heard before in Dublin. I felt authorized to say that in the not distant future Sir Edward Carson and some of the leaders of the South and West might be sitting together at a table in an effort to find a common ground upon which all four counties could stand. Much as Carson is disliked in the Dublin "pale," he is greatly respected—as is well known he is Dublin born—and I do not believe that it is at all impossible that certain of the Irish leaders will treat with him and try to reach an agreement which can be submitted to Parliament.

The contrast between the concentration of mind and energy in Ireland and the left-handed and absentminded methods of the British Government is striking. During the whole time since the rebellion of 1916 the British Government has made hardly a single effective move to check the progress of the republican plans. The first blow that has got beyond the guard of Sinn Fein was the Prime Minister's taking up the recent challenge from labor with such promptness and vigor. So dilatory and blundering has been the Government policy that the Irish leaders had begun to conceive an actual contempt for it.

With such uninformed and ill-considered resistance from London, I have no doubt that the Irish leaders had begun to believe that they would succeed and that they would listen to no compromise, however far reaching. If they receive a serious check, however, I believe that they will change their minds and accept a compromise, hoping to use it as a steppingstone to the ultimate goal of an Irish republic whenever circumstances again favor taking up that scheme.

The position of the hierarchy and the priests is difficult to discuss without fear of wounding sensitive feelings. In a general way, my observations confirm the statement of a broad-minded Church of England rector, with whom I talked before coming to Ireland. He said that the priests had not, in his opinion, fomented trouble in Ireland; they were the shepherds of their flocks, and it was inevitable that they should reflect the feelings and opinions of the people with whom they were so closely associated. As I have before remarked, the Church, in its natural effort to preserve the body of Catholicism, has shaped Irish character into such forms as to make it amenable to any revolution inspired by passion for country.

## Religion Insulates Irish.

A by-product of Catholic training has been the preservation of the isolation of Ireland. As in some other Catholic countries, like Spain, the people have remained impervious to outside ideas which would have tended to broaden them and, to some extent, loosen the hold of the Church. It can hardly be expected that the representatives of the Church could take any other view than that the spiritual welfare of the community depended upon devotion to the Church, and that it was the chief business of the hierarchy and priests to preserve this devotion. Unfortunately for the other view—namely, that the welfare of the country would be promoted by some process of broadening—the Catholics and the Protestants have been walled off from each other in such a way as to prevent commingling.

In visiting Ulster and the rest of Ireland it seemed to me that if Ulster and Catholic Ireland could be combined racially and industrially the mixture would produce a wonderful race of people. Each would provide what the other lacks; but in order to bring about such a combination it would be necessary to have some omnipotent power that does not now exist.

The chief aim of the Church must at all times remain that of maintaining Catholicism in Ireland. The hierarchy would do nothing to estrange a very large body of its own community, and it is inclined to await developments. Most people with whom I have talked believe that the hierarchy is not inclined to go further than an autonomous dominion, though large numbers of young priests have associated themselves strongly with the movement for a republic.

Many priests, especially the humbler ones, are in the Sinn Fein movement heart and soul, but the hierarchy, except a few hot-heads, cannot be suspected of approving of the extreme violence that has been practiced by Sinn Fein. The latter organization is too powerful for the hierarchy to attack frontally. The danger of anti-clericalism is smaller in Ireland than in other Catholic countries, but it exists remotely, and the policy of the hierarchy, therefore, is to sail as close to the wind as it can.

I have often been asked by American friends to find out how the Bishops stand, and what they want. The answer is that they want to keep the Church strong in Ireland. Their policy is modified from month to month, in accordance with changing conditions. If Sinn Fein succeeds, and Irish independence is achieved, they feel that they must keep themselves in a position to go along with the republic. And they want to be able, in case matters remain where they are, to preserve the prestige of the Church. The extremists among the priests and Bishops are more in evidence than the moderates. The rampant and able Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Fogarty, Dr. Colahan, the Archbishop of Cork, and men like them loom larger than the more moderate, but not less influential, Bishops. From a viewpoint remote from the actual scene, it gives something of a shock to see Bishops and priests straddle great moral questions like murder and assassination, but at least a human explanation is furnished by what I have said.

This is the second of a series of articles on Ireland by Mr. Grasty. The first appeared yesterday. Others will appear tomorrow and Tuesday.