

# THE NATION.

By Arthur Griffith.

From *Sinn Féin*, November 29, 1913.

True to his nature, the English workman declines to involve himself in the hardships he has encouraged his Dublin victims to endure. Once again a credulous section of the Irish people listened to the voice of the Saxon shouting brotherly love, and once again they have been betrayed. As it was, it is, and ever shall be. No section of Englishmen have any use for Ireland and the Irish except the exploiters' use. No class in Ireland leans on England save to its ultimate loss—sometimes its ruin. The landed aristocracy were flung aside when their effectiveness as a garrison for England ceased, the commercial classes have had their interests ignored, where they were not deliberately sacrificed, to the advantage sometimes of but a single English shire; the Irish workman has been utilised as a living body on which to test quack remedies for social ills. No English class has ever hesitated to betray its corresponding class in Ireland when betrayal spelled profit. And every class in Ireland has at some time or other believed in English friendship and invoked English aid against its own countrymen. So it is that England has been enabled to continue to rule and ruin this land. So it is that foreigners fatten on our decay.

In the last three months we have seen two sections of Irishmen, engaged in a domestic quarrel, invoking the intervention and the assistance of the common enemy of both. We have seen some of these who should have guarded the national standards denouncing their own countrymen to English hypocrisy and seeking to cast to the maw of bloody-minded humanitarianism that nationhood whose preservation through centuries of ruthless destruction involved the immolation of the noblest of our race. The proffered price for the aid of our ancient enemy, in slaying our brother Irishmen was Ireland's Past and Ireland's Future. It was not in the power of those who

proffered—of those who called Englishmen ‘brother’ when the integrity of the nation was assailed—to make good the bargain. They have stripped themselves of their pseudo-nationalism, and in the eye of Judgement stand to-day revealed enemies of the Nation—the more destructive the more they can lay any truthful claim to sincerity in the evanescent hysterical emotions and biased beliefs which pass with them for convictions.

In the balance lies a Home Rule Bill which if it enters into law will, however useful in some respects it may be, involve an ever-present danger to the integrity of the nation if national opinion be not educated to full understanding. From the legislation of the proposed Irish Parliament there lies an appeal to England and an impotent Irish representation is retained in the British Parliament to excuse and invite that appeal. In Ireland as in every country there will be conflicting parties and the temptation to have the triumph of one over another set at naught by invoking English revision will be considerable. If it be yielded to, instead of a national legislature we shall have in College Green a house terests (?)<sup>1</sup>. The nation will be shattered, and the Last Conquest of Ireland be carried on before open eyes blind to the light.

This must never be. We have poor respect and no love for the simulacrum of a national legislature which it is proposed to set up in this country. But if it be set up we know our duty and the duty of every other Irishman who honours his nation. It is, to make no appeal from its decisions to any extra-Irish tribunal, no matter how imprudent or unjust we may hold these decisions to be. We may not accept the verdict of our countrymen against our reasoned convictions, but we shall not appeal against that verdict to any foreign court. This, we hold, is the imperative duty of every Nationalist, and we further declare our conviction that Irish public opinion must be roused to the point of treating as traitors to the nation any man or party in Ireland who, under Home Rule, no matter what the merits be, would appeal

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<sup>1</sup> Cartlann: Appears to be clerical error made in original print.

from the Irish Government to the English Government. Diarmuid MacMurchadha was an ill-used and maligned man, but we have suffered in every generation and justifiably cursed his memory, because to avenge his personal wrongs he opened the way to the destruction of the nation's independent existence. However we differ and strive between ourselves under Home Rule, this our safety and our honour demands—that we shall join to trample in the earth that man or party who invites the foreigner to intervene in our quarrels. The danger can only exist while ignorance is strong and patriotism weak. Germany with its hundred feuds sank all and stood a unit when the last Napoleon menaced its integrity. The safety of the German nation was the supreme law. So must it be with us. Relying on the innate patriotism of the Irish nature, men have gone on dreamily believing that in a self-governed Ireland none would deny in malice or in ignorance the supremacy of the nation, and have stood aghast and dumbfounded when they witnessed perverted intellectualism and frenzied illiteracy striving to throw the pearl of Irish nationality to the Saxon swine in the name of virtue. The lesson must be taught by a self-governing Ireland, gently if it may and harshly if it must, that the nation is not any man's nor any generation's to barter, that it is a trust from our ancestors which we must transmit to our posterity—that no man or body of men can claim to be above the nation, and that the nation is greater than all its units. Thus only we can perpetuate ourselves and live and die in honour.