

WHERE THEY BREAK TREATIES—WHERE THEY MAKE TREATIES.

By Arthur Griffith.

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The position of the Irish voter, the Irish representative, the English Parliament and the European Peace Conference was crystalised in a phrase spoken by the Mayor of Sligo at the banquet on St. Patrick's Night. 'Send them,' said he, speaking of those whom Irish constituencies elect, 'Send them where they make treaties—not to where they break treaties.'

For generations Ireland has sent her elected representatives to the place where England breaks treaties. Now she can and must send them to the place where Europe will make treaties—the Peace Conference.

For generations Ireland has sent her elected representatives to the place where England breaks treaties—and now there are a quarter of a million less roof-trees in Ireland, millions of acres less cornland, and a million less men and women than there were on that fatal day in 1801, when, rejecting the shrewd advice of one wise Irishman, Irishmen entered the London Parliament, to be impotent of achievement and yet to sanction by their presence the imposition of a hostile and usurped authority upon our country.

Ireland has wakened from a troubled dream. When we told our countrymen thirteen years ago that the election by an Irish constituency of one man who would refuse to enter the doors of the English Parliament or acknowledge the validity of its authority over Ireland would do more to bring the Irish Question to a solution by carrying it into the region of world-politics than all the speeches, resolutions and manoeuvres of an Irish Party in the English House,

the vast majority of our countrymen could not credit our teaching; when Charles Dolan of Manorhamilton, convinced by his experience in the English Parliament that we were right, resigned that institution and asked Leitrim to elect him under the banner of Sinn Féin, he was defeated in the contest—for he had a century of misunderstanding in Irish politics to overcome as well as the organised forces of political corruption; but when he brought 1,200 voters of Leitrim with him in repudiating the right of England to govern this country, he won a victory. Nine years afterwards Roscommon achieved for Ireland what Leitrim first gallantly essayed. Had Leitrim succeeded the past nine years of Irish history would have been written in an Irish hand. Resolve now that the next nine years shall so be written.

Behold what happened. Roscommon having elected a Representative, not a member of the English Parliament—having elected not a man to sit in that Parliament, but a man to refuse it recognition—then at once that Parliament rushes to concern itself with the ‘Settlement of Ireland.’ Hearken to English Whig and Tory and Radical barking in unison—‘The Irish question must be settled.’ The ‘Times’ and the ‘Daily Telegraph’—Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Bonar Law—the instigators, the financiers, and the leaders of the ‘Ulster’ conspiracy against Ireland, are now determined that Ireland shall have Home Rule. Seventeen years of Mr. Redmond and his marionettes posturing on the ‘Floor of the House’ brought from that House not Irish Self-Government, but more insults and more handcuffs and more taxes for the Irish people, and why has the election of a man who will not go to the English Parliament made that institution talk more about Ireland and think more about Ireland than it has talked or thought in years—except in the way of coercion? Because every English statesman knows that when Ireland turns her back on the English Parliament, by refusing to elect men to attend its proceedings, Ireland becomes as much a question of European politics as the Balkan States have been for fifty years past; and because under such circumstances no European Congress can discuss and devise the European future without taking the position and relations of Ireland

and England into its account. North Roscommon told England that Ireland was going to send her representatives to the Peace Conference—and to avert Ireland going to the Peace Conference, England would even set up a body in Ireland and label it—‘This is guaranteed to be an Irish Parliament—please do not touch.’ Therefore, if a general election intervenes between now and the assembling of the Peace Conference Ireland must elect not 80 men to attend the English Parliament, but 80 men to proceed to that Conference, headed by Count Plunkett, and to claim and demand from it the restoration of Ireland to Europe by the restoration of her sovereign independence. We guarantee that Ireland in such circumstances will be admitted to the Conference and that her claim will be examined and debated by assembled Europe.

But unless a political accident happens, the English Government will not permit Ireland the opportunity of a General Election. Still Ireland must prepare for the possibility and be ready for the fact of bye-elections occurring in the coming months. Let therefore, men of character, men of principle, men of intelligence, men of ability, be found in each constituency to champion the cause when opportunity for election comes—the greatest opportunity Ireland has had for more than a century—the opportunity of this generation—the opportunity of gaining Europe to declare that the freedom of Ireland is necessary to the future stability of the world.

Think of it; it is the opportunity of a century. It can be done and it must be done by the people declaring now that the men they elect in each constituency they will elect to go not to the place in London where they break treaties, but to the place in Europe where they will make the Treaties that will govern the destinies of the nations for another hundred years.