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The King

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WANTED.

I want a clever, spirited, and educated young man as my colleague to assume the journalistic control of a great Irish county, now virtually denuded of its Press, owing to the many oppressions and injustices to which the profession of Journalism in Provincial Ireland has been subjected of late years. He must be prepared to cycle round the county collecting news and making reports. If he is a short-hander so much the better; but intelligent observation and good graphic notes in long-hand will be, I think, sufficient. He must not be too proud to canvass for printing orders and advertisements, cheerfully undertaking the rough side of his work as well the smooth—that is to say, the literary and intellectual. He must also have sufficient spirit, on fit occasions, to withstand such tyrannical influences within his county as may be brought to bear against him. I expect, too, on his side a general agreement with the principles of A.I.R., which, he will remember, are only those which were professed by all Ireland and by the whole Irish nation and race from very early times down to the year 1793—the year that witnessed the emergence, for the first time, of Revolutionary ideas. If he does his work well, I believe I can promise him a manly and honourable career, with a salary to be settled by mutual agreement.

Please reply to—

STANDISH O'GRADY,
Archersfield,
Kilkenny.

CAREFULLY CONSIDERED ARTICLES.

DEAR W. F. T.,—You tell me that A. I. R. wants badly well-considered articles on various subjects. That is so, but we must discriminate and differentiate. There is the well-considered article which aims at the bringing to bear of our political power upon the Imperial Parliament with a view to the promotion of legislative or administrative reforms. There is the well-considered article which endeavours to arouse, to illuminate, and to guide individual initiative and foster individual enterprise and the spirit of mercantile or industrial daring; a beautiful attribute of youth, and a very befitting resultant of the years of health, strength, energy, hope, and self-reliance, things which I would like to see more common and unnoticeable in our indolent and melancholy Island. Well-considered articles of the latter kind must do good, and a great deal of good, indeed. Good fortune and Providence assisting might do an infinite amount of good. Governments and Legislatures are, I think, only admirable in proportion to the degree in which they let loose and foster, inflame, and also illuminate the essentially self-reliant, self-sustaining energies, the ambitions, resolves and aspirations of the individual. Here and there all Ireland over, even in the torpid South, where almost all things crumble and decay while no one seems to mind, we have such individuals even now. Look at the brave Miss Curry of Lismore, with her hundreds and thousands of daffodils dancing in the breeze, and tossing their golden heads—(or as they did last spring and summer), her shining, gorgeous tract of flowers, there beside the

still Blackwater—the lady who, alone, this year, as with a delicate fairy scourge, drove out the invasive Frenchman and Scilly Islander, and planted her native land, not so much with flowers as with hundreds of happy homes.

Well considered articles, dear W. F. T., leading into such provinces of things—provinces so fertile, so promising, and also so attainable! will be always well considered by me. And this is the reason why I desire so ardently to see the land question settled in such wise, as will freely give to our talent, skill and education, our public spirit and private ambition, our capital and our labour, the right to connect themselves fruitfully with the virgin Earth, the divine matrix of all good things.

But, on the other hand, well considered articles, aiming at public and general action, I cannot permit at all, believing, as I do, that in relation to all such things, this Nation is held in the mortmain (dead hand) of the great Spell. Logical, statistical, well-articulated, long-tailed—I beg your pardon—well-considered articles are here so much time, talent, energy, and space wasted—wasted like good milk poured on the ground—like lectures on the art of oratory to the dumb, upon music to the deaf, wasted like the spreading of a feast before the dead or the sick to death.

You understand, I don't mean to say that you will, or that you ought to agree with me; but this you will see now is A.I.R.'s attitude towards well considered articles, and the distinction which it draws between the two classes of such; for one the open hand and the door flung wide; for the other the shut door and—from an upper window—an ugly face, a repellent voice, and a projected rifle.

PEAT AS FUEL.

With over three millions of turf bogs in this country, and a scarcity of all other classes of combustibles, it appears strange that peat is not used in a much larger quantity for the purpose of fuel. The principal defects urged against peat as a fuel are dampness, small caloric power, and want of density. Damp turf often contains one-fourth its weight of water, and even when it feels perfectly dry to the hand, one-tenth of its bulk may be water. It contains only one-fourth as much caloric or heating power as coal, but with the process mentioned below, it may be made almost equal to coal in this respect.

Surface turf is only about one-third as heavy as coal, but the turf that is taken from the lower levels of our bogs, say forty feet from the surface, is almost as dense as broken coal, as the following figures will show:—

A cubic yard of light turf contains	600 lbs.
" " good turf	900 lbs.
" " densest turf	1,160 lbs.
" " solid coal	2,240 lbs.
" " broken coal	1,456 lbs.

Thus, even in its native state, the density of deep level turf to coal is in the ratio of 21 to 29, or almost three to four; but if the turf be compressed, the lighter turf can be made almost as dense as coal and the heavier turf denser than it. But even dense or compressed turf has a much smaller amount of caloric than coal, a defect which will be easily removed if the sods be steeped in

tar. This process will make the turf give out three-fourths the amount of caloric capable of being abstracted from coal. Therefore a furnace would need to be one-third larger for turf than for coal, an alteration which would be an important saving when we reckon the difference in the prices of the two combustibles.

A ton of coal can never be had in Dublin less than 16s. per ton, ordinary turf can be obtained in the Bog of Allen at 4s. per ton, and could be compressed, tarred, and sold in Dublin at 8s. per ton, but as the caloric effects of this turf would be only three-fourths that of coal, one ton of coal therefore would be equal to one and one-third ton of turf, which would cost 10s. 8d., being a saving of 5s. 4d. per ton of coal, or one-third cost of fuel.

Peat can be made into charcoal by the same process by which wood charcoal is manufactured. This peat charcoal is extremely combustible and not suitable for ordinary use, but it is eminently fitted for use in the manufacture of gunpowder, the smelting of iron, and the working of the finer sorts of cutlery. No kind of charcoal excels it in anti-septic and deodorising qualities.

A great field is open for any patriotic Irishmen who would give their attention to the business of manufacturing suitable peat fuel and charcoal.

Many other products, including peat moss litter and an excellent disinfectant soap, are capable of being obtained from our peat bogs.

THE KING.

BY T. G. BOWLES, M.P.

A well-founded jealousy of certain Monarchs having been sedulously cultivated by the banded Whig families of the Revolution into an ill-founded jealousy of all Monarchs, the English people have long been made to believe that the enemy is the King and the danger his prerogative; and that it is therefore necessary that the power of the Crown should be diminished and that of the Minister increased. Hence the evolution of the Cabinet and the Cabinet Council.

As a humble student of Constitutional history and an attentive observer of the Constitution in latter-day action, it seems to me that this set purpose of diminishing the Royal authority in order to increase the Ministerial authority has manifestly been continued too long and pushed too far; that the balance of power in the kingdom has been dangerously disturbed, to the great mischief and trouble of the State; and that, if we would escape greater mischief and trouble, the time has arrived when the Sovereign should exercise somewhat more and the Minister somewhat less power.

The highest executive authority known to the law is the King—not, indeed, the King alone, but the King in Council, which means the King in Privy Council. Now the Privy Council is a most ancient, illustrious, and august body of counsellors, prime in importance among the acknowledged institutions of the kingdom. It has its own President, an officer of great dignity, its own oath, binding to secret and faithful counsel, its own book, wherein its proceedings are recorded by the Clerk, its own high functions, and the traditions of ages behind it. By and

with its advice the Sovereign may do almost anything; without it almost nothing. But being thought, even when having only 30 members, too numerous a body for confidential dealing with high affairs of State, it was, while nominally left with all its attributes, superseded in practice by the Cabinet Council, and is now an honorary body of over 200 members, retaining indeed all the machinery for action and all the insignia of dignity, without any of the weight or importance that belongs to the actual exercise of power.

The Cabinet Council, on the other hand, which has inherited, or as some would say, usurped, the functions performed during centuries by the Privy Council, has none of the signs of dignity. It is a body huddled away at once from public recognition and public control, and surrounded, as well in its origins as in its proceedings, by a strange and mysterious secrecy. No man can point to any authority for its creation, or explain by anything but usage, without explicit authorization, its continued existence. It is unknown to the law. It finds no place or recognition in any part of the Constitution. It keeps no records and is, therefore, so conducted as to make it impossible for any one—even for itself—to say what it has done or what refused to do. It has indeed been erroneously represented to be a committee of the Privy Council, but that Council never either named it or committed anything to it. It gives no guarantees and is under no safeguards for its conduct. Nevertheless, this incredible and elusive body it is which has taken, and been allowed to take and to keep, all the superior executive governing power of the Empire. What it decides the King in Council performs. The highest national issues of peace and war, treaties, alliances, policy, and legislation are determined by it, regardless of its having no other existence or credit than that which belongs to the secret conclave of a party cabal banded together for party purposes.

This amazing body has not only existed for over 200 years, but in the course of that time it has persistently sought, like an Oriental despot, to kill all that lay near to its power. And it has met with no little success. The Sovereign, it is boasted, has been reduced to a condition in which he may indeed reign as a pensioner, but must not govern as a King. The Privy Council has been extinguished, except for the sake of its oath, which the Cabinet Councillor, having none of his own, is forced to borrow, and has now become an honorific mob, containing, indeed, besides the Ministers past and present, a few men of commanding abilities, such as Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir Frederick Milner, Mr. William Kenrick, and Sir Bernhardt Samuelson, but composed for the most part of reputable persons whose counsel on high affairs of State can hardly be considered invaluable. But the quality of the Privy Council matters no longer. Being found, as was said, too numerous for secret council, it has been superseded by the Cabinet Council. The Cabinet Council itself for the same reason is said to have been superseded for the most important business by the Inner Cabinet. But, as you truly observe, the keystone both of Cabinet and of Inner Cabinet is the Prime Minister. And now it appears that the Prime Minister has dropped out of the arch into what I see described as the

"inaccessible sub-tropical gardens" of Beaulieu.

Under these circumstances the humblest student and observer may be pardoned for asking where we stand, how we got there, and whether it is prudent or safe to remain there, much less to go on in the same direction.

Yet in that same direction we are proceeding at a greatly accelerated rate. From the Revolution of 1688 there has been a continuous increase in the power of the Minister, and as continuous an evasion or destruction of all that could moderate or limit that power; until now we are rapidly reaching a point, if, indeed, it be not already reached, when the Minister will escape all control either by King or Parliament. The statesmen who embodied the principles and safeguards of the Constitution in the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement little contemplated this. The latter Act provided that no placeman should be capable of sitting and serving in the House of Commons. It also provided that "all matters and things relating to the well governing of this kingdom which are properly cognizable in the Privy Council by the laws and customs of this Realm shall be transacted there, and all resolutions taken thereupon shall be signed by such of the Privy Council as shall advise and consent to the same." These two provisions were repealed in 1705 before the time appointed for them to become operative. By the repeal of the latter the Minister was relieved from the obligation to consult and convince the Privy Council in great affairs of State, and from the perhaps more important obligation to leave a record of his acts; whereby he became untraceable in and unpunishable for his doings, and, in fact, irresponsible. By the repeal of the former, the rule that no placeman should be capable of serving in Parliament was in effect replaced by the rule that no man should be capable of becoming a placeman unless he served in Parliament. Thus Ministerial irresponsibility was secured by Parliamentary complicity. The Minister and the House of Commons had combined against the Sovereign, the House sharing in some of the power and all of the plunder; and to the maxim "The King can do no wrong" was now added the maxim, the Minister can do any wrong, but cannot be made responsible for it.

But the Sovereign being removed out of the effectual government of the country by House and Minister combined, the Minister at this day seeks, in the sight of all men, to remove equally the House of Commons, and thus to leave himself the sole effectual power in the State. The right of initiation, whether in legislation or otherwise, has been taken almost entirely away from the House by the Minister. The right of calling for the remedy of grievances before granting Supply has been so pared away that scarce a trace of it exists. The right of free speech, or of any speech at all on any subject at all, is so fenced about by rules, mostly new and made by the clerks at the table to shut up loopholes, that it can only be exercised at the will of the Minister. Each Session witnesses new additions to the closely-woven net wherein the feet of the private member are entangled should he dare attempt to "raise" any matter whatever in any form whatever; each Session brings new restrictions on

the powers of the House, new additions to the power in it of the Minister. And now we are being told that still further additions are intended to be made to the rules, the closure, the gag, the guillotine, and the policemen, whereby the Minister imposes his will on the House. The King reigns, but may not govern, and now it is to be, the House votes, but may not debate.

Having destroyed the Sovereign, the Minister is now in course of destroying the House, and, for want of spirit in that Assembly, has already so nearly succeeded that there is to-day scarce a House of Commons left.

Thus the Minister has gained in power at the cost both of Sovereign and of Parliament, and is now practically a dictator shrouded in secrecy and irresponsibility.

The enemy, in short, is no longer the King, but the Minister; the danger no longer the prerogative of the former, but the irresponsibility of the latter.

Nevertheless, in spite of all, the Constitution remains as it was, and the rights of the Sovereign and of the House only require to be asserted and enforced, for they cannot be denied.

Why, then, should the King not resume the exercise of his right to preside at the Cabinet Council?

The practice of deciding on great affairs of State in a purely private cabal of Ministers, requiring no quorum, keeping no records, subject to no rules, and wholly removed from the public eye, is in many respects dangerous. But in none is it more dangerous than in this, that human nature being what it is, we must expect when the chiefs of a party are privately brought together to exercise power under these conditions, that they will be tempted to discuss and decide upon public affairs, primarily with a view to the interests of their party, and only secondarily with a sole view to the interests of the State.

The King, however, is outside and above all parties, and his sole interest is the preservation of his kingly dignity and of the State whence he derives it. If therefore the King presided at the Cabinet Council, some of the evils now belonging to that body would be removed or diminished, and some new safeguards and advantages would arise.

What is done of State business in Cabinet Councils cannot be, must not be, and is not concealed from the King, nor can it eventuate in action unless with his consent. What is done, indeed, is now only communicated to him when decided; but how much better that he should hear it discussed and himself take a part in the decision he is expected to carry out.

The King would then hold, as it were, a connecting link and maintain a continuity between successive Administrations, and the inconvenience of the absence of records would thus to some extent be obviated.

The King, again, has means of information, especially with reference to foreign affairs and the designs and intentions of foreign courts, nay, usually, of far more trustworthy origin and greater value than any accessible to the Minister. He could therefore often impart to the Cabinet Council, were he habitually to preside at it, such information as might be of the highest value and the greatest importance in its effect on the decisions to be taken.

There are, moreover, occasions when the King is, as it were, left all alone

without a Ministry to advise him. When a Cabinet resigns it is the King who must decide what statesman shall be sent for to form another Cabinet, and who must practically decide alone. It is a supreme moment of the uttermost importance. In such a moment it would be of the greatest assistance to the Sovereign if he had previously acquired in Cabinet Councils a knowledge of the various statesmen among whom he had to choose, a knowledge not merely of their personal qualities in private life, but of their statesmanlike quality in public action, of their ability and good sense as displayed in the confidential and uncontrolled discussions of the Cabinet, and of the soundness of their judgment as shown by the event. This consideration may at some future moment prove important, for times have been when, foreseeing a proximate retirement of a Premier, cohorts of cousins and relays of relations have banded themselves together in advance to force the hand of the Sovereign, to compel him to send for no other but one of themselves, and thus to perpetuate a Nepaulese heredity in the Premiership.

The King, presiding at a Cabinet Council, would represent the State at large, and in his presence it would be impossible to debate State affairs otherwise than with a principal view to State interests; or party interests, if at all, otherwise than as a subsidiary thereto. A Cabinet Council presided over by the King could no longer be, or be suspected to be, the conspiracy of a faction. In his presence and under his presidency it must become a Council of State.

Such a Council, under the presidency of the Monarch, who represents all the interests of all the Empire, would probably inspire much more confidence, for instance, in Ireland and among Irish members than one exclusively composed of the representatives of English interests, and the uncontrolled chiefs of parties, committed to what the Irish hold to be an unjust and evil Irish policy.

Why, then, should the King not attend and take part in those meetings of his confidential servants known as Cabinet Councils?

I can divine some reasons why a Minister, intent only on the promotion of party interests, the maintenance of his own irresponsibility, or the increase of his own power, should object to such a thing. I see no reasons of State against it, nor any that could be defended on the ground of public welfare.

This is no new thing. It is a thing only in abeyance. Queen Anne presided over her Cabinet Councils, which met once a week. George I. did not follow her example only because he understood no English, and since then the usage has been to leave Cabinets to deliberate and to decide alone without the Sovereign. Nevertheless, the Sovereign still presides over the Privy Council, which is dignified but powerless; and it seems therefore especially unreasonable that he should not also preside over those select few of that Council forming the Cabinet, which, though unrecognized, is all powerful.

With the decreasing power of Parliament, with the increasing power of the Minister, and the increasing need of some check thereon, we may well turn to the Sovereign with the hope that he will resume the exercise of his undoubted right to preside over that Cab-

net Council which disposes of the destinies of his kingdom.

The House of Commons has before now been induced to combine with the Minister against the Crown in the interests of liberty and good government. It is now time that, in the same interests, it should look to the Crown to assist in preserving the State from the dangers of an uncontrolled Minister.

Writing of the affection of the throat from which, according to rumour, his Majesty is suffering, one of our popular Irish papers has the following:—"King Edward bids fair to be one of the most popular of English kings as he is one of the most sensible, and there are few people who will not heartily wish that he may come safe through the storm."

THE RECALL OF THE SONS OF USNA.

(Continued.)

NAISI.

I hear a call like the voice of a man of Eri.

DEIRDRE.

It is only a herdsman calling home his cattle (*she puts her arms round Naisi's neck*). Beloved am I become so little to you that your heart is empty and sighs for Eri?

NAISI.

Deirdre, in my flight I have brought with me many whose desire is afar while you are set as a star by my side. They have left their own land, and many a maiden sighs for the clansmen who never return. There is also the shadow of fear on my name because I fled and did not face the king. Shall I swear to keep my comrades in exile and let the shame of fear rest on the chieftain of their clan?

DEIRDRE.

Can they not go? Are we not enough for each other, for surely to me thou art hearth and home, and where thou art, there the dream ends, and beyond it there is no other dream (*a voice is heard without more clearly calling*)

AINLE.

It is a familiar voice that calls! And I thought I heard thy name, Naisi.

ARDAN.

It is the honey sweet speech of a man of Eri.

DEIRDRE.

It is one of our own clansmen. Naisi, will you not speak? The hour is passing, and soon there will be nought but a destiny. (*The voice of Fergus near the dun is heard calling*)

Naisi! Naisi!

NAISI.

A deep voice like the roar of a storm god! It is Fergus who comes from Eri.

ARDAN.

He comes as a friend. There is no treachery in the Red Branch.

AINLE.

Let us meet him and give him welcome! (*The brothers go to the door of the dun. Deirdre leans against the wall with terror in her eyes.*)

DEIRDRE (*in a low, broken voice.*)

Naisi! (*Naisi returns to her side. Ainle and Ardan go out. Deirdre rests an hand on Naisi's shoulder, and with the other points upward.*) Do you not see them? The bright birds which sang at our flight! Look, how they wheel about us as they sing! What a heart-rending music!

And their plumage, Naisi, it is all dabbled with crimson; and they shake a ruddy dew from their wings upon us! Your brow is stained with the drops. Let me clear away the stains. They pour over your face and hands. Oh! (*She hides her face in Naisi's breast.*)

NAISI.

Poor frightened one, there are no birds. See, how clear are my hands! Look again on my face.

DEIRDRE (*looking up for an instant.*)

Oh! blind staring eyes!

NAISI.

Nay, they are filled with love, light of my heart. What has troubled your mind? Am I not beside you, and a thousand clansmen around our dun?

DEIRDRE.

They go—and the music dies out. What was it Lavarcam said?—"Their singing brings love and death."

NAISI.

What matters death, for love will find us among the Ever Living Ones. We are immortals, and it does not become us to grieve.

DEIRDRE.

Naisi, there is some treachery in the coming of Fergus.

NAISI.

I say to you, Deirdre, that treachery is not to be spoken of with Fergus. He was my fosterer who taught me all a chieftain should feel, and I shall not now accuse him on the foolish fancy of a woman. (*He turns from Deirdre and as he nears the door Fergus enters with hands laid affectionately on a shoulder of each of the brothers; Buinne and Ilann follow.*) Welcome, Fergus! Glad is my heart at your coming whether you bring good tidings or ill!

FERGUS.

I would not have crossed the sea of Moyle to bring thee ill tidings, Naisi (*He sees Deirdre*). My coming has affrighted thy lady who shakes like the white wave trembling before its fall. I swear to thee, Deirdre, that the sons of Usna are dear to me as children to a father.

DEIRDRE.

The birds of Angus showed all fiery and crimson as you came!

BUINNE,

If we are not welcome in this dun let us return!

FERGUS.

Be still, hasty boy.

ILANN.

The lady Deirdre has received some omen or warning on our account. When the Shee declare their will we should with due awe consider it.

ARDAN.

Her mind has been troubled by a dream of some ill to Naisi.

NAISI.

It was not by dreaming evils that the sons of Usna grew to be champions in Ulla. And I took thee to my heart Deirdre, though the Druids trembled to murmur thy name.

FERGUS.

If we listened to dreamers and foretellers, the sword would never flash from its sheath. In truth, I have never found the Shee send omens to warriors: they rather bid them fly to herald our coming.

DEIRDRE.

And what doom comes with thee now, that such omens fled before thee. I fear thy coming, warrior. I fear the Lights of Valour will be soon extinguished.

FERGUS.

Thou shalt smile again, pale princess,