

IRISH NEWS

PROTESTANT MINISTERS PLEAD CAUSE OF IRELAND.

The Inter-Church League for Irish Freedom, an organisation formed among non-Catholic clergymen in several States of the Union, has sent broadcast a letter calling on their fellow-ministers to rally to the support of the Irish Republic in the interests of fair play (says the *New York Truth*). The league has headquarters at 2126 Woolworth Building, New York City. The letter follows:—

"Reverend and Dear Brother. The religious aspect of the question of Irish independence concerns you vitally. Stripped of its camouflage of political propaganda, the religious issue in Ireland comes to this: The world is asked to believe that to maintain its supremacy in Ireland the Protestant religion is desirous of keeping a nation in political bondage, and to attain this unholy end is willing to use machine-guns, bomb-dropping aeroplanes, the dungeon, and the sword.

"This is a slander against our religion that Protestants the world over resent. Protestants have never fought to enslave any people, no matter what their creed might be. Protestants gladly fought for the freedom of Catholic Cuba, Catholic France, Catholic Belgium, and Catholic Poland. Protestantism is more hurt by the charge that it is selfishly opposed to the freedom of the Irish nation than is the cause of Irish freedom.

"President Eamon de Valera is the accredited representative of four-fifths of the Irish people, duly elected to speak for them in a regular election ordered and held in Ireland under British supervision. He is in our country to put the case of his people before the bar of American public opinion. While he is in your city he will be glad to meet you and to answer any questions you may see fit to ask.

"We are not asking you to change your opinions, but we feel we have the right to ask before you give utterance to them that you assure yourself for the sake of moral probity as well as intellectual honesty, that your opinions are based upon a fair study of the case from both sides. Thus only can an honest conviction be arrived at.

"The Inter-Church League invites you to hear President de Valera—to accord him the same courtesy that the Irish people accorded to Benjamin Franklin when he advocated the cause of the American colonies in Ireland.

"The committee on arrangements in your city will be glad to see that you have a private interview with Mr. de Valera if you so desire. We ask that you avail yourself of this opportunity for the sake of justice and fair play.—We are, fraternally yours,—Norman Thomas, East Twenty-eighth Street, New York, Minister of the Presbyterian Church; Owen Lovejoy, Charities Building, New York, Minister of the Congregational Church; William Benjamin Spofford, St. George's Church, Chicago, Minister of the Episcopal Church; G. S. Lackland, Grace M. E. Church, Denver, Colo., Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Following are the names that appear on the letter-head of the Inter-Church League:—President, the Hon. John Milholland, New York; Vice-President, Lindsay Crawford, President Independent Orange Lodges, editor *The Statesman*, Toronto; Secretary, the Rev. Norman Thomas, editor *The World To-Morrow*, New York; Treasurer, the Hon. William Harmon Black, Woolworth Building, New York; Executive Committee, the Rev. Owen Lovejoy, President National Conference of Social Work, New York; Mrs. William John Brown, Walbrook, Md.; Miss Garcia Goller, New York; Mrs. Nathaniel G. Sexton, jun., Baltimore; Professor Herbert E. Cory, University of California; Professor Arthur Upham Pope, New York; the Rev. G. A. Lackland, Ph.D., Denver; the Right Rev. Frederick Lloyd, Chicago; the Rev. William B. Spofford, Chicago; Daniel C. O'Flaherty, Richmond, Va.

CATHOLIC TOLERANCE IN IRELAND.

English Protestants are beginning to see that they have been hoodwinked concerning the relations between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland (says *Are Minded*). Harold Begbie, in *The Lady Next Door*, did much to open their eyes to the realities of the case; and another non-Catholic author, Mario Harrison, adds this testimony: "I have been amazed to discover in Ireland not so much but so little bitterness, not so many but so few religious quarrels. Catholics and Protestants live together to-day in great harmony, and discordant notes are invariably those sounded by politicians and meddling men to whom

party politics are the greatest joy in life. . . The religious quarrels of Ireland have been painted in such lurid colors that one would imagine that the whole country was seething with religious hatred. In actual fact, Ireland lives to-day in great peace and quietness in all religious matters." It is well that the true state of the case as regards the relations between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants is being made clear. The truth will facilitate the final settlement of the whole question of Irish government.

On the same subject *America* comments:—Sir Horace Plunkett himself says: "As I have stated publicly more than once, I have never observed that being a Protestant is a disadvantage to a man in Irish public life." Judge Rentoul, of the Central Criminal and City of London Courts, declares: "English audiences never believe these religious arguments. My very large number of relatives in Ireland are all Protestants. Religious persecution is the very last thing they fear."

The Right Honorable Pirrie, Chairman of Harland and Wolff, Ltd., shipbuilders, Belfast, ex-Lord Mayor of Belfast, ex-High Sheriff of Co. Antrim and Co. Down, declares: "The records of Irish Catholics show the greatest generosity towards Protestants who are accorded positions of honor and emolument far beyond the ratio to which they are entitled upon any populative basis. I confess with shame that even now the spirit of religious intolerance, although in ever lessening degree, still prevails amongst a portion of the population of Ulster."

General Sir Alfred E. Turner, on the staff of Lord Spencer, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, private secretary to Lord Aberdeen and Commissioner of Police, Counties of Cork, Kerry, Clare, and Limerick, says:—"I never came across a case of religious intolerance, far less of persecution, on the part of Catholics towards Protestants though I heard of several, which upon investigation proved groundless. There is far more religious animosity on the part of Protestants towards Catholics, and this is the result of the old leaven of Protestant ascendancy which, like all hereditary and inherent consciousness of imagined superiority, dies very hard. The bogey of religious persecution of Ireland is displayed to alarm Protestants, though there is about as much reality in the cry as there is in the mirage of the desert."

The Right Honorable Thomas Shillington, linen manufacturer of Belfast and member of the Privy Council, avers:—"So far from concurring in the disadvantage of Protestants I am convinced that by granting self-government to Ireland, the Protestant population will be placed in an altogether better and desirable relation toward their fellow-countrymen. It is a great misfortune that religion should be dragged into the service of a political party and be used by it for political purposes. Ireland has been degraded by those who have sought to stimulate and fester to the utmost of their ability among Protestants an aversion towards and a distrust of their Catholic neighbors."

IRISH MISSION TO CHINA.

An important and interesting event in the life of the above mission has recently taken place. It appears that a separate vicariate has just been erected by the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda which is to be placed in the sole charge of the Fathers of the Irish Mission. The new vicariate covers an extensive area in Central China with a population of about five million inhabitants. It is situated in the province of Hupeh, in the rich and fertile valley of the Han river, and contains many important towns, the best known of which is Hang-Yang.

This is the first occasion in modern times that Irish priests have undertaken the evangelisation of a purely pagan nation. It marks the revival of the missionary spirit which was so characteristic of the Irish Church in the centuries succeeding the death of St. Patrick. This new missionary movement, which has so suddenly risen up in Ireland, will, we feel certain, not only confer an immense boon upon China, but also shed fresh lustre on the Church which has given it birth.

Some sixteen priests of the Irish Mission will sail for their new field of labor about the middle of March. We wish the good Fathers every success in their great spiritual enterprise, and we confidently hope that they will be instrumental in bringing the light of Faith to millions of Chinese who are now enveloped in the darkness of superstition.—(Exchange.)

Poverty makes men come very near each other, and recognise each other's human hearts; and poverty, highest and best of all, demands and cries out for faith in God.—Phillips Brooks.

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