

ENGLAND'S TORTURE OF IRISHMEN

For several days in May (says a *Weekly Independent* representative in London), there has been a constant stream of visitors to the Irish wing of St. James' Hospital. From all parts of London Irish men and women have travelled to Wandsworth to see the patients and the wards are laden with gifts from people anxious to speed their recovery after their terrible experiences. Prominent in the incessant flow of visitors are Irish priests.

All, including those released, were in good spirits, and already showing signs of returning strength. A conspicuous figure in the principal ward was Mr. C. Culhane, Thurles, a man in the sixties, who, in spite of his age, has gone through the hunger strike from the beginning. He is now able to walk about and his cheery presence and stalwart figure made him the centre of attraction.

Mr. D. J. O'Sullivan, chairman of the Tralee U.C., released lately, though looking thin and worn, was in the best of spirits. "It is refreshing," he said, "to find myself in the midst of kindly Irish people after having been in solitary confinement in Wormwood Scrubbs for a week. The interest taken in us by the Irish men and women of London and the Irish atmosphere here have acted like a tonic on us." He had lost about two stone in weight during his 14 days' strike.

Science of Barbarity.

He was arrested at 1 a.m. on March 28, in his home, three weeks after he had completed a three-months' hard labor sentence in Cork Gaol for, as alleged, having "seditious documents" in his possession. He was sent to Cork, where he remained a fortnight; then to Belfast by sea from Queenstown, and from Belfast to Pembroke for Wormwood Scrubbs, where he arrived on the night preceding the first of the big demonstrations outside the prison. He joined the strike at once.

To add to his sufferings four meals were placed in his cell every day, and he was obliged to put them outside the door each time.

Mr. F. Mulcahy, Cashel, who is in St. Mary's Infirmary, Highgate, arrested on March 30, told of his having been brought first to Cork and then to Belfast after a three weeks' sojourn in the former. He described how he and his compatriots were on hunger strike for two days before being removed on a destroyer en route for Wormwood Scrubbs.

Orange Lambs Let Loose.

Before they left Belfast, he said, about 1000 Carsonites assembled at the spot where the handcuffed prisoners were in charge of military and police. The "Loyalist lambs" not only groaned them for all they were worth, but taking advantage of their helpless position, fired stones, iron nuts, and other missiles, many of which unfortunately found billets. "And yet," said Mr. Mulcahy, "our escort did nothing whatever to prevent this disgraceful exhibition of cowardice."

Mr. Mulcahy gave a harrowing description of the treatment to which the men were subjected on the journey from Belfast to Pembroke. He fully bore out the stories already told of the brutality, most of the men being handcuffed for a considerable portion of the voyage, and this notwithstanding their naturally weak condition. Mr. Godfrey, Murroe, who was in the next bed to Mr. Mulcahy, did three days' thirst strike in addition to the hunger strike.

An Officer—and a Gentleman.

Mr. James Leddan, 55, Limerick, stated that on the way to Pembroke from Belfast the men, handcuffed in pairs, were ordered to go through a manhole to "accommodation" below. Some protested that the task was practically impossible for men handcuffed together, the answer from a military officer being: "You swine, if you don't come down, I'll throw you down on your heads."

Mr. Hayes, of Belfast, substantiating the accounts of brutality, added that Mr. Hogan, of Tipperary, who was handcuffed to Mr. Cotter, of Bantry, vomited blood for a considerable part of the voyage, and the same officer was asked to have the handcuffs removed, and blankly refused; whereupon a naval officer, realising the serious condition of the prisoner, took the matter into his own hands and, calling an artificer, had the manacles sawn off.

Another awful case was that of Mr. O'Brien, who was handcuffed to a comrade, notwithstanding the fact that he was paralysed on one side. Several times he asked that the handcuffs be removed, as being dangerous not only to himself, but to his partner also. The same gallant military officer, of course, refused.

"Irish Swine" Again.

Many others in St. Mary's told similar stories, one of them adding that after arrival at the London terminus, and while being conveyed in lorries to Wormwood Scrubbs, some of the prisoners were sitting while the police escort remained standing. The same British officer told the police to sit down, and "let the Irish — stand."

"It is known, according to some of the ex-prisoners," adds our correspondent, "that many of those now in the hospital have not had either their money or personal belongings sent to them, nor have vouchers been sent them to enable them to journey home."

"This is all the more extraordinary inasmuch as every man whom I interviewed said that the prison doctor, who accompanied them in the ambulances to the hospitals stated definitely that they could have themselves released. Mr. Hayes suggested as an explanation that the authorities are desirous of keeping the men out of Ireland until after next month's county council elections."

FAMOUS CHURCH DESTROYED.

A recent cable message says:—"A stroke of lightning set fire to the ancient and magnificent Church of St. John, Rome, which was destroyed with many most valuable paintings."

The Basilica of St. John Lateran lies in the north-west of Rome, just inside the city walls at the Porta San Giovanni. The gorgeous ceiling is said to be by Michelangelo, but it is more likely to be the work of Giacomo della Porta. Pope Martin V. provided the rich inlaid pavement, and a bronze statue of him stands in front of the Confessio. The associations of the Basilica are of great interest. The Church names it "the mother and chief of all the churches of the city and the world." This first church was called Basilica Constantiniana. It was thrown down by an earthquake in 800 A.D., and rebuilt by Pope Sergius (904-11). Burnt in 1308, Clement V. restored it, with paintings by Giotto. Again burnt in 1360, it was restored by Popes Urban V. and Gregory XI.; then altered by Popes Martin V., Eugenius IV., Alexander VI.; modernised by Pius IV. (1560). Great alterations were made by Borromini in 1650, and the facade with an upper loggia by Galilei was added in 1734. During 1875-85 the structure was enlarged. In the centre of the nave is the Gothic canopy by Giovanni di Stefano (1637), restored in 1857. The paintings are by Barna da Siena, who died in 1387. It contains the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul. To the left is the Altar of the Sacrament, with four columns of gilded bronze from the original building. The apse has the famous mosaics by Jacobus Torriti (1290), and the thirteenth century cloisters are by Vassalletus.

O Fate! let me glide on a sun-lit tide,
To the land where no grief may get!
Bear me, I crave! on an opal wave,
To the kingdom of Let-Us-Forget!
Where cascades flow 'neath a tropical glow,
In an equable temperature;
And glad hearts know the blessings they owe
To Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.

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