

IRISH NEWS

TERENCE MACSWEENEY: A DEATH-BED MESSAGE. A JAPANESE INTERVIEW WITH HIS SISTER.

We are indebted to the courtesy of an esteemed correspondent (says the *Catholic Press*) for a cutting from a Tokyo paper, the *Japanese Times and Mail*, containing a report of great interest to Irish-Australasian readers—an interview with Sister Francis Xavier, of the Order of St. Maur, that lady being a sister of the late Terence MacSweeney, the heroic Lord Mayor of Cork.

The interviewer recalls the fact that when the Lord Mayor lay dying, "all Tokyo, in common with all the rest of the world," followed with sympathetic interest the bulletins from London.

The report proceeds:

But only a handful of people here knew that within the walls of the convent of the Order of St. Maur, in Kojimachi-ku, one little woman was reading the despatches with a heart-throbbing interest that only a sister could feel. This was Sister Francis Xavier, whose name before she took the veil was Katherine MacSweeney, a younger sister of the man whose heroic sacrifice—however one may view his motive—touched the world.

Sister Francis Xavier's presence in Tokyo is not known to many. She is a teacher of English in what is probably known as the most exclusive mission school for girls in the capital. But to the few who knew she was a sister of the late Lord Mayor MacSweeney she has steadfastly refused to express any of her sentiments for public repetition until called upon by a representative of the *Japan Times and Mail*.

"If there is anything I can say which will help the cause for which my brother died, I will let the *Japan Times and Mail* publish it," she finally agreed. "I have left the world, you know, and have no worldly interest. But the cause which required suffering and death from my brother is still close to my heart."

Sister Francis Xavier is tall and slight, and very gracious in manner. Once she consented to the interview she talked readily.

"I am not surprised that he offered his life for his country. Even as a boy he was remarkable for his patriotic spirit, and felt a sense of a great and definite mission. The family thought him destined for the priesthood, but his ideals led him in the other direction. His first poem, published in 1901, 'Nature's Hymn and its Message,' gave a clear insight into his patriotic zeal as a lad.

"My brother's life was one of singular sweetness and gentleness. His message to me from Brixton during the closing hours of his life commemorating my birthday is filled with infinite tenderness and deep religious fervor.

"His generosity knew no limit, and I was not surprised when I learnt his first act after taking the oath of office as the Lord Mayor of Cork was to set aside half of his salary to the widow and five children of his predecessor. He was a graduate of Dublin University, and was recognised as a poet and dramatist at a very early age. Many of his finest minor poems were written for the family, and have never been published.

"His marriage was a happy one. His wife is a woman of remarkably fine character. A daughter was born to them. She had been taught only Irish. Her mother spent some time in Ballingarry, the great centre of the revival of the ancient tongue, that her little daughter's accent might be perfected.

"My brother's last message to his family was: 'In life or death victory is ours. In death we shall be greater. This makes our end happy. God is watching over us, and our trust is in Him. We shall triumph. Love and blessing.—Terry.' He held no hatred towards anyone and vengeance had no place in his heart. He radiated love and happiness when dying, cheering those who could not bear to think of him as gone," she finished, bravely.

It may be interesting to learn that the father of Lord Mayor MacSweeney, the late John MacSweeney, went, in his youth, to Italy to join the army of self-defence of the

Pope, and that the motto of the MacSweeney family is *semper fidelis*—"ever faithful."

It is also of moment that, writing to his sister in 1911, he defined his attitude of thought on freedom, declaring the motive should be vindication and that liberty should always benefit the enemy instead of injuring him.

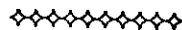
The following extracts from letters written Sister Francis Xavier by her brother, show his most intimate thoughts on Ireland's unhappy political conditions:

"Our enemies are brothers from whom we have become estranged. Here is the fundamental truth that explains and justifies our hope of establishing a real patriotism among all parties of Ireland, and a final peace.

"It is a spiritual appeal that primarily moves us. We are urged to action by a beautiful ideal. The motive to force must be likewise true and beautiful. It is love of country that inspires us, not hatred of the enemy, or a desire for satisfaction of the past.

"When, therefore, you teach a man his enemy is in a deep sense his brother you do not draw him from the fight while he should fight, but you give him a new conception of the goal to win, and with a great dream inspire him to persevere and reach the goal.

"We should make this a resolution: Our future history shall be more worthy than that of any contemporary State. We shall look for prosperity, no doubt, but let our enthusiasm be for beautiful living; we shall build up our strength, not for conquest, but as a pledge for brotherhood, and a defence for the weaker ones of the earth; we shall take pride in our institutions, not only as guaranteeing the stability of the State, but as securing the happiness of the citizens. We shall arouse the world from a wicked dream of material greed, tyrannical power, of corrupt and callous politics to the wonder of a regenerated spirit—a new and beautiful dream; and we shall establish our State in a true freedom that shall endure for ever."



NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IRISH PEOPLE.

The *Irish Bulletin* recently had some caustic and timely comments on the attitude of the British press towards the Irish question. It selected the following passages from the *Daily Telegraph* for animadversion:

"To-day, unless all the available testimony is misleading . . . the feeling for some form of appeal to the South Irish constituencies is gathering strength."

All sane critics censure the criminal folly of thrusting away the largest and most generous effort ever made by an English Government to meet the claims and ambitions of Irish nationalism. There can be no doubt that this is the feeling of the overwhelming majority of Southern Irishmen, whether they call themselves Sinn Feiners or not."

Commenting on this, the *Bulletin* says:

"The *Telegraph* draws these conclusions largely from its own imagination, assisted to some degree by the tone of the Irish daily press. The Irish daily press is not a good guide. Eighty per cent. of the Irish people are Republican. None of the daily newspapers in Ireland are Republican. They owe their continued existence to this very fact, for the papers which reflected Republican opinion were all duly suppressed by the British Government. The fact that no daily newspaper in Ireland has declared itself Republican may appear to English people as a serious handicap to the Republican movement. But it should be remembered that Ireland threw off the old Parliamentary Party and rallied to Sinn Fein while the whole daily press of the country was anti-Sinn Fein, and the majority of the Irish people have for five years remained unshaken in their allegiance to the policy of independence, although none of the Irish newspapers has ever supported that policy. The Irish people look to the daily press for news, not for views. The opinions expressed by this press are not the opinions of the Irish people, nor do they influence the political point of view of the people. Their most notable success seems to be in misleading their London contemporaries, as they have misled the *Telegraph* into its ridiculous display of ignorance. As other sections of opinion may similarly be misled, it may be as well to restate a few facts."

It is significant that the Irish papers in reproducing these extracts omit the more salient of the references to themselves.

Wall Papers

At Prices that make the Buying Easy, from ALEXANDER CLARK and Co.

Freight Paid on all Goods. Write for Samples. 3 Fitzherbert St., Palmerston N.