

THE BENEVOLENT IRISH SOCIETY

In reviewing the Benevolent Irish Society on St. Patrick's Day in the Episcopal Library, His Lordship the Bishop of Down, in part, said:—

From certain remarks that have been running in the air lately, it seems to me that an effort has been made in some quarters to cast a slur upon the loyalty of the Benevolent Irish Society, and by consequence of the Catholics generally in this country.

I think I am quite safe in saying that we as a body, although not admitting any such imputation, I do not think the essence of the Society consists in the usual protestations, the blowing of trumpets or ringing of bells.

It is not the least of our duties to be loyal to our King and our Queen, and to be loyal to our country, and to be loyal to our religion.

As upon every other subject, so also on this, the most of us have had our share of experience. I have here in my hands the "Constitution of the Benevolent Irish Society," and I read the "Tavern in St. John's, Newfoundland," and the "Story of the Fishermen," and I read the "Charitable Irish Society upon firm principles of loyalty, true benevolence and philanthropy."

This is the basis of the Constitution, and it is the basis of the Society's work. There was no question of denominationalism or sectarianism when it was founded. It is true that in the course of time, when other bodies of citizens, namely the English and the Scotch, established their similar national societies, the Irish Society insensibly and without any formal change in its constitution was left alone Catholics.

It is now practically, though not legally, a Catholic Society. As such, it is essentially loyal to the Pope, to the Catholic Church, and to the Catholic religion. It is not a religious society, it is a national society.

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and the government of Ireland by England at the present moment.

We are told that Irishmen are in constant fear of sympathizing with the Boers in this war, because the Boers are depriving British subjects of civil and religious liberty, the very things that Ireland is crying out for at home.

Well in the first place, I reply, is there any people on the face of the earth who have a greater right to be inconsistent than the Irish? But, is it really inconsistent? We are told that we are to be taken to account for the British subjects in the Transvaal, the rights of citizens, the liberty of the franchise.

I have no intention of becoming the apostle of the Boers on this or any other point. I am not the public preacher at the court-house, I have no intention of exaggerating on this point. At all events, not only Irishmen but a large majority of the English people are of the opinion that the Boers are suffering by the British subjects in the Transvaal were not of so serious an and subversive character as to warrant this dreadful war, and that if left alone they would right themselves and disappear in a short time.

Now, if Englishmen can be found who believe in the Boers, what can be expected of Irishmen.

On the very day that the brave Irish soldiers were giving their life-blood in defence of the British flag on the Tugela, Irishmen in Ireland were being deprived of their civil rights and franchises, they being challenged and rejected from serving on jury panels for no other reason than their nationality and their religion.

This happened in Sligo, where 22 Irishmen were stricken off the jury list recently by a religious test, one of the Loretto nuns from Drogheda in the heart of the Transvaal.

Now as to religious liberty. I read the other day a letter which was written by a religious sister, one of the Loretto nuns from Drogheda in the heart of the Transvaal.

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will appear we are not the only inconsistent people.

We have a lower grade of the law and respect for the person or name of the King. If we are guided by human motives alone, in a nation that oppresses another, that tramples on the rights of conscience, that treats its people with contempt and cruelty, has any right to expect subordination and respect, and there is always inherent in men and nations the sacred right of rebellion.

It is only when the Catholic Church is only when the Catholic and Christian teaching and tells us that we must obey even unjust laws, that we can expect a people to pay the lowest of what I may call negative loyalty.

As long as a country acts tyrannically and unjustly, it is not only a right but a duty to rebel, and to rebel, shall submit quietly and submissively. The Church, as I said, recognizes the right of rebellion against unjust laws, but she teaches that it should not be a general and unqualified rebellion, but a rebellion against a certain and definite wrong.

Considering what I have shown as the treatment of Ireland, even at the present day, I say that all that England has any right to claim from Ireland is that she should be treated as a colony, and that she should be allowed to govern herself.

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OF COURSE HE WAS. "Dik, arn't you sorry your big brother is going away to school?" "You bet; he is going to take his wheel along."

YOUTHFUL STRATEGY. "Harry," exclaimed the little boy's mother, "if you don't stop pulling that cat's tail I will pull your hair and give you a chance to see how you like it yourself."

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