

The Catholic Record

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ENGLAND AND THE VATICAN

The announcement of the appointment of Sir Henry Howard, a veteran British diplomat and a Catholic, on a special mission to the Holy See was received throughout the Empire without much adverse comment.

It is not altogether unprecedented in recent times. In 1887, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, an Envoy Extraordinary from the Vatican presented the congratulations of Leo XIII. Mgr. Ruffo Scilla was accorded a gracious reception at the Court of St. James; and later the Duke of Norfolk was commissioned as Representative of Her Majesty to convey the Queen's congratulations and good wishes to the Pope on the occasion of his Episcopal Jubilee.

Purcell, in his Life of Manning, thus comments: "Such an interchange of official courtesies, limited though it was to a special occasion, marked an epoch in the relations between England and the Holy See; it bore witness, likewise, to the good understanding which now exists between Her Majesty's Catholic and non-Catholic subjects.

There can be little doubt that the Special Mission of Mgr. Ruffo Scilla would in due time have led to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Court of St. James and the Vatican.

"The semi-official, semi-diplomatic, but unaccredited and unacknowledged mission of Mr. Errington, afterwards created a baronet, entrusted by Mr. Gladstone with the duty of making or receiving private communications to or from the Vatican was in itself neither a dignified proceeding nor agreeable to the people of England.

"What the people of England before all things admire and approve of is openness and straightforwardness. If public policy demands the establishment of Diplomatic Relations with the Vatican, let it be done openly and above board.

On account of its secret and underhand character the Errington mission was a failure. It irritated the people of England; in Ireland it excited suspicion and mistrust.

"Statements of both parties and leading politicians have long recognized the fact that, in an Empire with possessions so vast and varied, which numbers millions of Catholic subjects of the Queen, Diplomatic Relations with the Holy See was a matter of policy dictated by the nature of things.

Mr. Purcell calls the "blind jealousy" of Irish Catholics may have been prudent and open-eyed determination to safeguard their ecclesiastical independence. "Hostility to the Pope," is a ludicrous misnomer for the well-known attitude of Irish Catholics on this question during the troubled times of the last century.

Now they have won their way not only to national recognition but to the warm-hearted esteem and confidence of the democracy of Britain. "Blind jealousy" on both sides is rapidly becoming a mere historic memory; a memory, however, which will go far to prevent future mistakes.

The Nonconformist Conscience, less biased and better informed, is no longer the dreaded political factor it once was in English politics. Even unreasoning Orange hostility may soon become less unreasonable.

That there should still be some evidence of traditional Protestant uneasiness in the premises is natural and to be expected; nor is it surprising to find lingering traces of Irish Catholic mistrust.

At all events, Sir Henry Howard's mission is one of much greater importance than, as was stated generally in announcing his appointment, merely to convey His Majesty's congratulations to Benedict XV. on his accession to the Throne of the Fisherman.

This is quite evident from what Sir Henry said when presenting his credentials. The Morning Post gives the text of the Envoy's speech for the reproduction of which we are indebted to the Tablet:

Addressing the Holy Father, Sir Henry Howard said: "In delivering the letter which the King, my august master, has addressed to Your Holiness, I am charged by His Majesty in the first place, to offer his cordial congratulations to Your Holiness on your accession to the Pontifical Throne, and to assure you of his sincere friendship.

Moreover, in view of the numerous questions which have arisen, and in which Your Holiness and the King have common interest, His Majesty has desired to place himself in direct relations with Your Holiness to facilitate the discussion of these and any other questions that may arise, and has done me the great honor to name me his representative to Your Holiness. In communicating to Your Holiness these wishes on the King's part, I desire to assure you that I shall do all in my power to fulfil the high mission entrusted to me."

The Pope, in a most cordial reply, said he highly appreciated Great Britain's attitude towards the Holy See, and he hoped the presence of the British Envoy would further cement the good relations between the Catholic Church and the great realm in which so many Catholics lived in prosperity.

At once futile and foolish. The first and immediate result has been to secure the instant publication of new editions of this great moral instruction in French, Flemish, English, and Spanish—in all the languages that count—and effective arrangements for their distribution throughout the world.

This brutal attempt to gag the freedom of the Catholic pulpit, and to put a muzzle upon the mouth of the representative of the Belgian hierarchy, shall have only this result, that ten men will read the forbidden Pastoral for every one who would have heard of it in ordinary circumstances.

The German troops may threaten as they please, they may set sentries in the churches, they may imprison priests, and they may even from the confessionals, but the Cardinal's winged words are adroit on all the winds, and will pass to the ends of the earth.

The Pastoral may be read in the churches of Belgium, perhaps, only by stealth, but thanks to the Germans, every private soldier now serving in the Belgian Army will receive a separate copy for his own individual use.

And why should these violators of the neutrality of Belgium be so frightened at the appearance of the eloquent but simple exposition of elementary Christian truths? Here and there come passages which may make the invaders wince, but they tell us nothing that is new.

"Germany," exclaims the Cardinal, "violated her oath; England kept hers. These are the facts." Quiesce, The Germans may wince—but could they deny? Again, in ringing words the Cardinal says to his sorely tried flock: "I hold it as part of the obligations of my episcopal office to instruct you as to your duty in face of the Power that has invaded our soil and now occupies the greater part of our country.

The authority of that Power is no lawful authority. Therefore in the soul and conscience you owe it neither respect, nor attachment, nor obedience." The Germans know all that as well as we do, and so armed men must be set around Catholic pulpits to prevent and intercept this message from a Bishop to his flock.

And one thinks the German authorities might well have been grateful to the Cardinal for the extreme care and circumspection he observes when he is dealing with the wholesale atrocities committed by their troops in Belgium. He speaks only of what he knows and of what he has been able personally to verify.

"Hundreds of innocent men were shot. I possess no complete necrology; but I know that there were ninety-one shot at Aerschot, and that there, under pain of death, their fellow citizens were compelled to dig their graves. In the Louvain group of communes one hundred and seventy-six persons, men and women, old men and sucklings, rich and poor, in health and sickness, were shot or burnt.

In my diocese alone, I know that thirteen priests or religious were put to death." He will not speak of the massacre of priests which took place in the diocese he has not visited, but adds: "There were to my own actual personal knowledge more than thirty priests shot in the diocese of Namur. Tournai, Liege." It is surely well that these things should be known, and therefore that the futile attempt to suppress Cardinal Mercier's words by force should have been made.

One result is that the Pastoral will be read aloud in every Catholic church in the diocese of Westminster. That the German authorities should have done their best to intercept correspondence between Cardinal Mercier and Cardinal Bourne at least shows an intelligent anticipation of what was likely to happen.

he says, "there was something which Christ hid from all men, when He went up a mountain to pray. There was something that He covered constantly by abrupt silence or by impetuous isolation. There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us, when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth."

The other is a sentence from one of Manus' tales of Irish folk-lore where he tells of the origin of the Fairies. According to this tradition when the great battle was fought in heaven some of the angels did not take sides—remained neutral, like some of the nations in our present war, waiting to see which side would likely win.

The sentence imposed upon them was that they could not enjoy the beatific vision, for they did not fight for God, but that they did not deserve to go to hell because they did fight against Him. They were given their choice of any other abode and they chose to remain till the end of time on the heathery moors and in the wooded glens of Ireland, whose people are kind and compassionate towards the little exiles from heaven.

"And they pay you back in kind," adds the author, "for they are gentle and genial with you. Only tricksters at times—for when they left heaven they did not leave love of fun behind."

There are many good reasons why we do not associate laughter and merriment with the person of Our Lord. First of all it would be out of keeping with His Divine Personality. It is true that He shed tears for others' sins and sorrows, but this accords with His mission, which was to wipe away our tears, to bear our infirmities and to carry our sorrows.

Manifestations of mirth had no place in the life of Him who chose to be a "Man of Sorrow," to be a victim for our sins and to spend His whole life upon earth under the shadow of the cross. But as there is a sorrow too deep for tears, so there is a joy too great for laughter. Such was the joy that Our Lord experienced, even during the bitter hours of His passion.

Only for a moment did He sacrifice even that, when on the cross His human nature, voluntarily deprived of the Divine support, forced from His lips the agonizing cry "Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani." Chesterton, therefore, is right when he surmises that the great thing that Our Lord hid from men was His mirth. Albeit that mirth far transcends our human concept.

Experience proves that mirth and sanctity go hand-in-hand. Where will you find persons that enjoy their recreations better than old religious, whose lives of self-sacrifice and obedience are drawing to a close? What body of men are so jolly and possessed of such a keen sense of humour as the Catholic clergy?

What nations have been more noted for their love of innocent fun and frolic than Catholic Quebec, Catholic Ireland and England in the days when she was "merris England?" A kind Providence has bestowed upon us mirth and laughter for a two-fold purpose, as a reward of virtue and as a necessary relaxation in our spiritual warfare.

If you wish to see an illustration of this just watch a Catholic congregation enjoy a social evening after a week's mission. They are like a lot of little children—that is those of them that made the mission. They are just bubbling over with merriment, ready to laugh on the provocation of an obsolete joke or on no provocation at all.

Surely this is not the laughter that Our Lord condemned; for it is the human expression of the spiritual peace that reigns in their hearts. No, what Our Lord said "woe to" is the worldly laughter of those who rejoice not in the Lord, or who would fain stifle by hilarity the voice of a reproving conscience.

But apart from the expression of joy there is another reason for this perhaps abnormal merriment. During the week these people have been face to face with the eternal truths, death, judgment, heaven and hell; hence there is a tendency to relax the strain to which their minds and very souls have been subjected.

These who possess a lively faith. Nature demands recreation after labor, and there is no labor so hard as genuine prayer and meditation, because they are beyond the scope of our natural faculties.

We may conclude, therefore, that since joyousness is one of the outstanding characteristics of the blessed, that since even the little exiles from heaven (in Irish folk-lore) still retain their love of fun, those who are on their way to heaven should surely be merry. It is true that the saintly in glory need not the feeble expression of joyous transports that befit those who are still uncertain of their salvation, and with whose smiles tears and fears are so often mingled.

The difference, however, is but one of degree. As grace is the germ of glory, so Christian mirth is the forerunner of eternal peace. "THE GLEANER."

MR. REDMOND AND HIS CRITICS

In a special article in the RECORD of December 19th we went thoroughly into the question of Ireland's participation in the present war. The facts we then adduced to justify Mr. Redmond's alliance with England are still fresh in our readers' memory.

We believe that the tone of that article met with general approbation, as is evidenced by the many congratulatory letters we received from very competent critics. Moreover, if imitation be the sincerest flattery, then the fact that an American college professor "lifted" our article, and without the alteration of a comma delivered it as a special oration on "Ireland's Position in the Present War" should induce us to forgive such barefaced plagiarism.

Even if a prophet is said to have no honor in his own country, the RECORD is evidently accepted as the last word in orthodox in educated circles across the border.

The onslaught on Mr. Redmond still continues. A noisy little band of extremists of the class that the Dublin Leader once called "tin pike rebels" still denounce him with the bitterest invective. The role of critic is in-born in certain natures. There are those whose delight is to destroy but who could not build up anything if their very lives depended upon it.

And of course if one makes sufficient noise he will always succeed in attracting a certain mob following. Now it seems to us that senseless hate is but a poor gospel to preach to the masses. We cannot understand how any journal of importance or man of weight should be guided by the theory that because England has persecuted Ireland Ireland should therefore go on hating England in sæcula sæculorum.

We are not living in the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth centuries, but in the twentieth. And we believe that, even were there no scriptural injunction about forgiving our enemies, it would nevertheless be good policy to let the dead past bury its dead.

We yield to no man in our love for the cradle land of our race. But we cannot see that we love Ireland more by ignoring facts. The applause of the crowd never appealed to us as a guarantee of infallibility. It is easy to draw cheers from the mob provided you do not ask them to think. We remember some years ago during the celebration of the centenary of the Rebellion of 1798, the "Memory of the Dead" was a very popular feature at patriotic gatherings.

One stanza of the ballad reads: "We bravely fought and conquered At Ross and Wexford town, And if we lost at Vinegar Hill 'Twas drink that brought us down." Many a time, after the speech making and the flag waving was over, did we hear these lines chorused from the bar of a hotel. The poor fellows who had shouted themselves hoarse over the recital of the valorous deeds of their forefathers no doubt needed a little refreshment. And it never struck them as incongruous to be denouncing the course of strong drink while they quaffed the brimming glass. So much for the thinking power of the mob.

war. That was his position then. That is his position now. It was a novel stand for an Irish Nationalist leader to take, but conditions were themselves novel. When fighting had to be done Mr. Redmond did not shirk the challenge. His agitation against English rule in Ireland had made him acquainted with the inner walls of a British prison. For more than a generation he had made war, relentless war, upon the misgovernment that was strangling his native land. But now peace had been made and he was a party to the treaty.

And because he chose the path of honor and prepared to keep his word he is denounced as a traitor. But time will vindicate his stand.

If it is to the eternal credit of Mr. Redmond that he faced the danger of possible hostility from his followers in the stand he took, it is no less to the credit of the people of Ireland that they approved his attitude. The hates of centuries are not obliterated by the stroke of a pen, and English rule in Ireland had left an evil legacy. But the good sense of the people realized that the old days had passed forever, and equally with their leader did they resolve to forgive and forget. Never was faith in a people's loyalty so signally rewarded.

The memories of old wrongs were buried in the sea of oblivion, and not a single voice of any importance was raised in criticism of Mr. Redmond's attitude. But, like a certain class mentioned in the Scriptures, cranks and extremists will have always with us. In Ireland they were a negligible quantity. Half-baked Socialists, "tin pike rebels," Ireland had long laughed at their antics. They had never been supporters of the parliamentary movement, and now they thought they saw a chance to finally discredit it.

The critics of Mr. Redmond might be expected to produce some constructive plan of their own. But what has Sir Roger Casement ever done for Ireland? When there was fighting to be done he was enjoying the ease of the British Consular Service. What have Arthur Griffith and Bulmor Hobson ever done for Ireland? At least one of them was prominently identified with the disastrous attempt to introduce Socialism into Ireland under the guise of the Dublin strike, and to rob the children of Ireland's capital of their faith in return for a loaf of bread. Ireland took their measure and decided that if they had to exchange Mr. Redmond it would not be to enthroned in his place the Socialistic economists of "Liberty Hall."

The attack on Mr. Redmond carries more weight in the United States from the fact that a journal of the influence and past record of the Irish World was deceived into abetting it. Then, too, the Irish in the States are mainly the descendants of those who had to flee from Ireland in the dark and evil days now happily over and done with. They imbibed hatred of all things English with their mothers' milk. They knew nothing of the transformation that had taken place in the relations between Ireland and England, and hence they were more liable to be deceived by the argument that now, as in the past, loyalty to England meant the betrayal of Ireland. When all this is taken into account it should excite no wonder that certain elements in Irish-American life are hostile to Mr. Redmond's "new departure." These elements are by no means the most influential. In the shelves of letters pouring into the Irish World office we seek in vain for the name of any prominent Irish-American. And we note with pleasure that the veteran Patrick Egan, ex-United States Minister and Land League hero, wrote to the organ of his friend, the late Patrick Ford, upbraiding it for its betrayal of the Irish Leader.

Up to the present Ireland has had an unhappy habit of throwing over her pilot when just in sight of land. O'Connell was thrown over by the Young Ireland Party, and the fiasco of '48 was the result. Parnell was deserted by his following at the dictation of an English minister, and Ireland paid for her betrayal by more than twenty years of travail. The men who now advocate a like desertion of Mr. Redmond are no friends of the Irish cause. But Ireland has learned a lesson from the book of the past, and if for no higher reason, then from motives of policy Mr. Redmond's position is secure.

COLUMBA.

Brethren, let us now begin to be good, and to become better, for hitherto we have made but little progress.—St. Francis.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

MUCH has been written since the outbreak of the War of the participation, enforced or voluntary, of Catholic ecclesiastics in its campaigns. For the first time in history, on a large scale, scholars, priests and even bishops have, under the laws now in force in France and Germany, been obliged to respond to the call of these nations to the colors, by taking their place in the ranks and bearing arms like other soldiers. There are said to be fully 25,000 of such in the French Army alone, and of these, very many have responded to their country's summons from the very confines of the earth. From the Far North of Canada, from the interior of China, from the depths of African jungles and from every other mission field, French and Belgian priests, faithful to their obligations, as Army Reservists, have hastened home to take their place in the ranks and to do their part in repelling the invader. There may be differences of opinion as to the justice or propriety of such an obligation, but as to the quality of priestly patriotism and fidelity to duty, as thereby manifested, there is no room for difference.

WE PROPOSE this week to devote a few paragraphs to the part these priestly patriots have born in the succession of hostilities which from their magnitude and calamitousness have shocked the world. The spectacle of a priest bearing arms as a common soldier is not from the nature of things a pleasant one to contemplate, but that he has by that very fact, been placed in a position to render unexampled service to his fellows has been so often demonstrated as to have passed out of the region of the debatable. While serving an earthly King he has found unprecedented opportunities for exercising his functions as the anointed ambassador of the King of Kings. Just how many souls he has saved by reason of his place in the ranks, earthly chronicles will never show, but they are recorded in letters of gold in the Book of Life, and will be revealed to all on the Last Day. If they that instruct or turn many to justice shall "shine as stars for all eternity," what may not be said of those who snatch them from the very jaws of hell?

AN INCIDENT is related by the Semaine Religieuse de Lyons. A seminarist of that city, enrolled in the 80th Infantry, was mortally wounded in the battle on the Aisne and died later of gangrene in a Paris hospital. During the eve of Rosary Sunday he was given the last Sacraments. During his delirium he spoke of the Holy Ghost, whom he had received as deacon, of the Blessed Virgin, to whom he commended France, of Our Lord, whose priest he had longed to become, and of the sacrifice he joyfully made of his life for his country. A wounded soldier close by, who has professed out-and-out atheism—the only one of the group who had not made his peace with God—was so touched by what he heard that he turned to the priest in attendance and asked for the Sacraments. They were given to him, and he died two hours later.

A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR incident is related by the Geneva Courier. A soldier in the ranks, who was by profession a school master, was particularly outspoken in his hatred of priests and religion. When his company first entered the trenches he was offensively violent in his abuse of Pope, priests and everything sacred. A few days worked a change. The sight of the wounded and the dying and the devotion of priests in the ranks to their comrades opened his eyes and he asked for the Sacraments, which, as a foreign contemporary remarks, goes to show that fire purifies more things than gold or silver, and that one learns in adversity who are his truest friends.

AS TO the bearing of priests under fire. A young Franciscan from Canada, Father Gonsalve de Bellaing, belonging to the 18th Infantry, so distinguished himself in action by his coolness and bravery, that besides being mentioned in despatches he was promoted on the field to the honorable office of Ensign of his regiment. Sergeant Pierre Pinard, of the 185th Regiment, who was a sub-deacon, was, after distinguishing himself in a charge, wounded in the stomach, thigh and head by a bursting shell. When told that he could not live he exclaimed: "Oh, how I suffer! But it is well. It is for the love of the good God, for my wounded